



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

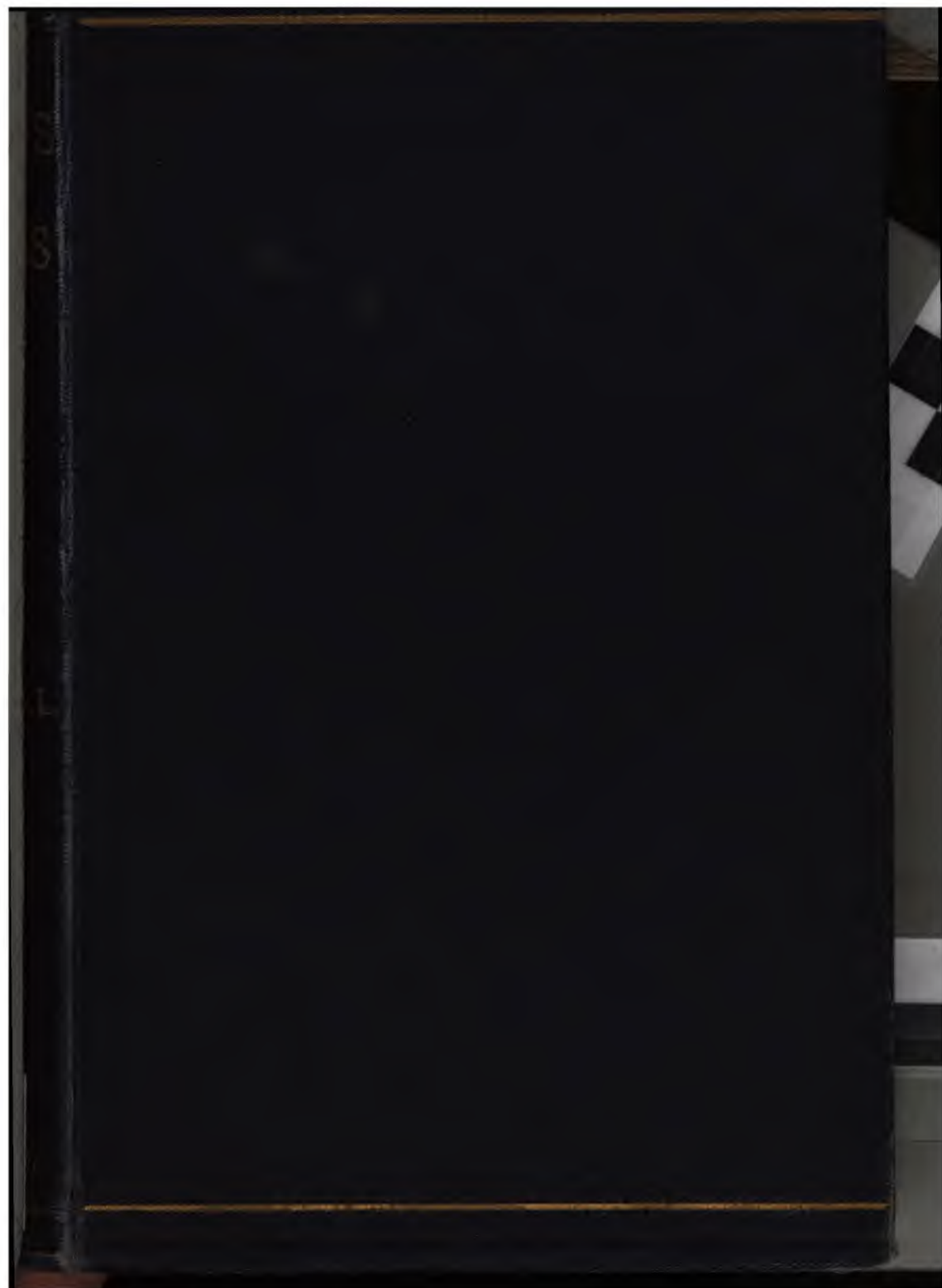
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



John Bedford

Nov 1892: A

1899

THOUGHTS AND SKETCHES

IN VERSE.

BY

JOHN HALL,

("J. H. J.")

SHEFFIELD:

PAWSON AND BRAILSFORD, HIGH STREET AND MULBERRY STREET.

1891.

ANX3211

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

My Wife,

THE SHARER OF MY "THOUGHTS"

AND CRITIC OF ALL MY "SKETCHES"

FOR THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS OF HAPPY

COMPANIONSHIP.

INDEX.

	PAGE
Albert Mortuus	44
Angler's Song of the Spring, The	173
April Thoughts for Middle-aged Readers	289
Autumn Thoughts	82
Baslow	I
Battle of "Blend'em," The	190
Bell Buoy at Sea, off Filey Brig, The	84
Ben Rhydding	193
"Blessing of the Bells," The.. .. .	275
Blind Harpist, The	272
Bradfield Bells	240
Bridge at Scarborough, The	6
Bridge of Tay, The	263
Chatsworth	179
Chiff-Chaff, To the	250
"Christians Awake," Thoughts on hearing	260
Christmas, 1870—In Gaul and Albion	57
Christmas Day	152
Christmas Day in Hall and Cot	177
Christmas Eve: a Reverie	21
Christmas Eve: at Home and Abroad	187
Christmas Remembrances	105
City of the Dead, A	62
Classical Carols—Chaucerian Hallamshire	45
Classical Carols—Tennysonian Hallamshire	48
Conversazione of the Literary and Philosophical Society, A	53

	PAGE
Dead Year, The	172
Death of Havelock, The	56
Derbyshire Stone-Breaker, The	227
Dives, To	285
Doctor Squills	222
Dreamland	213
Eighty-Fourth Regiment on its Return from India, To the ..	124
Engine Driver, The	247
Ex-Parish Clerk, The	74
Farewell, Old Year!	52
Farewell to My First Conjugal Home	201
Fern Hawker, The	283
Fisherman's Song, The	33
France, Ode to	130
Future of England, The	303
Gamekeeper, The	305
Grouse Land—In the Peak	266
Haddon Hall	183
Holiday Reflections	287
John Doughty's Christmas Dinner	77
John Hodge's Christmas	127
John Holland—In Memoriam—	18
Lessons on Contentment	257
Lighthouse Keeper, The	140
Little Harry	160
Little Inn by the Bridge, The	269
Little Shoe-black Boy, The	12
Man I Envy, The	198
"Man Wants but Little"	181
March Lyric, A	242
Middle Age Thoughts on Father Christmas	297
Midnight Flood, The	38

	PAGE
Midnight Mail, The	41
Missel-Thrush, The	101
Missing Ship at Sea, The	137
Miss Prim	277
M. M. F.—In Memoriam—	202
Morning Lay of Paterfamilias, A	142
Mrs. Mundi	215
"My River"	15
My Wife on Her Birthday, To	200
 New Nursery Rhymes.. .. .	 103
New Rookery, Our	195
New Year's Day, Thoughts on	308
November—On its Departure—To	50
 "Old Butcher"	 27
Old House at Home, The	36
Old Yew Tree, To an	208
 Pallida Mors	 87
Parson and Parishioner	294
Parson Gray	217
Passing Bell, The	175
Pauper Angler, The	9
Peace and War	167
Presidential Address to the "Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society"	233
 Relief of Lucknow, The	 64
Return of Spring, The	97
Rustic and the Poet, The	99
Rustic Invalid, The	220
 Scarbro' Fisherman, The	 210
Scarbro' Sketches	291
Sea Birds	300
Sea-side Meditations	156

	PAGE
Sea-side Recreations at Scarborough	70
Signalman, The.. .. .	144
" Spring, Spring, Gentle Spring"	164
Squire Sharpton's Repentance	203
Steam-Hammer, The	146
Stomach's Warning, The	134
Street Character, A	149
Street News Girl, The	66
Street Singer, The	30
Summer Dyspepsia	245
Summer Thoughts	132
Thomas Asline Ward—In Memoriam—	73
Thomas Sale, D.D.—In Memoriam—	166
Toll Bar Keeper, The	253
Uppington Church	90
Watch Night, Thoughts on	310
Welcome of the Men of Hallamshire to the Prince and Princess of Wales, The	115
William Howard, Esq., To	111
William Howard—In Memoriam—	89
Willow Warbler, To the	122
Wind at the Window, The	230
Wreck of the Atlantic, The	119
Wreck of the Northfleet, The	169

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The following Poems, or, as the title designates, "Thoughts and Sketches in Verse," have been published from time to time in "The Sheffield Telegraph" and other journals and periodicals during a space of nearly thirty years. They are now collected and reprinted for private circulation only, amongst the members of the author's own family, and numerous friends and acquaintances who have been kind enough to express their appreciation of the compositions as they appeared in print. Many of them, as the reader will perceive, have been written on special events, local and historical; also at Christmas, a season that always aroused the poetic element, and impelled the author almost irresistibly to dally with his fickle muse. He trusts, however, that the variety of the mode of treatment will prevent the subject becoming too monotonous.

Should the casual reader of these "Thoughts and Sketches" in future years find pleasure or amusement of any kind, or recall pleasing memories and associations of the past, their rescue from oblivion by publication will not have been altogether in vain.

Norbury, Sheffield,
June 22, 1877.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The first edition of "Thoughts and Sketches in Verse," published in 1877, for private circulation only, being now exhausted, the writer of them has been prevailed upon, somewhat reluctantly, to publish a second edition for general circulation in his native town and neighbourhood.

The new volume includes not only the poems contained in the first edition, but many others that have since appeared in various publications. As most of them have been written in early and middle life, and the author has now reached an age when his dalliance with the muse is not likely to be resumed, especially as the dear companion, to whom the first little volume was dedicated, is removed for ever from his side, he feels sure that no other motive will be attributed to him in publishing this edition than a desire to give those outside his acquaintance, who have expressed a wish to possess a copy of these "Thoughts and Sketches," an opportunity of doing so.

The editing and revising have been carefully done by his son, the Rev. G. W. Hall, M.A., Vicar of Norton.

Norbury, Sheffield,
September, 1891.

Sketches in Verse.

—:O:—


BASLOW.

—

Hail, smiling village of the vale !
Pride of the Peak's wild desert, hail !
No "lodge in the vast wilderness,"
No "Auburn sweet," whose loveliness
Fond poets sing in raptures rare,
Can with thy matchless charms compare !
With what delight do we descry
Thy blue smoke curling to the sky,
As down the moorland's shaggy side,
From the bleak hills above we ride ;
And view thee, like the promised land,
An Eden at our feet expand ;
Whose verdant landscapes spread around,
With beauty and luxuriance crowned,
Where "milk, and wine, and honey flow,"
And all that nature can bestow :
While peace and plenty, health and ease,
Yield every blessing that can please.

Here, far remote from worldly strife,
The peasant plods his even life,
Contented with the daily good
Of healthy toil and plenteous food.
Employing here his leisure hours
To cultivate the garden bowers ;
To train the roses round his door,
Some passing stranger to allure ;
Or prune with a fantastic hand
The trees that round his cottage stand ;
And thus the day's long labour close,
To sleep the night in sound repose.

Here, from the town's tumultuous noise,
The man of trade for refuge flies,
And seeks amid thy rural calm,
For all his cares a needful balm—
A sweet oblivion of all
The ills that business befall,
Musing instead of birds and flowers,
Of sunny streams or shady bowers.
Thrice happy he to rest or rove
By Derwent's banks, or Chatsworth's grove,
With pliant rod and slender line,
And tackle treacherously fine,
His angling skill anon to try ;
Or, basking in the sunshine, lie
And watch the deer gregarious stray
Along the park's untrodden way :



With pencil, book, or better still,
A fair companion, at his will
To read, or sketch, or climb the hill ;
And happy thus, without alloy,
Admire—exult—repose—enjoy.

Here, when the bees begin to hum,
And orchards are all white with bloom,
And blackbirds, piping through the air,
The genial time of Spring declare ;
Reminded then of thy dear charms,
The town lets loose its busy swarms,
Who long confined in noisome smoke,
Through dreary Winter's tedious yoke,
Like captive birds escaped, take wing
To sound the first glad notes of Spring ;
A motley group, of every age,
From laughing youth to manhood sage—
Merchants, mechanics, men of trade,
Professionals of every grade,
With clerks and shopmen, and their chosen
Wives and sweethearts by the dozen ;
In open britska, shay, or drag,
Or hired gig with doubtful nag,
From Owler's heathered heights they come
To thy sweet vale, Elysium !
To spend the day in harmless joys
Amid thy fairy Paradise—
To breathe thy bracing mountain air,

And feed their lungs with wholesome fare ;
And through a lengthened Summer's day
Here pass their joyful holiday.

And here have I, (not less inclined
Than others to relax the mind,)
With chosen friend or party gay,
Whiled happily the hours away—
Those wingèd hours that fly so fast,
But so delightful while they last :
How many have I passed within
That hospitable village inn
Called after Juno's favourite bird
And the proud crest of Rutland's lord !
A snug retreat, that stands alone,
Hard by the park's extended lawn,
Where Flora's fairest gems abound,
And creep the trellised walls around,
Rose, and clematis, and jasmine,
With honeysuckle wreathed between ;—
How oft have I, at early morn,
Inhaled their fragrance, freshly borne
By balmy zephyrs as they flew,
Scatt'ring their perfumes with the dew :
How often loitered on that green,
And gazed upon the glorious scene
That bursts, expansive, on the view—
A landscape of the richest hue ;
Meads, mountains, moorlands, woods, and hills,

With fountains, cataracts, and rills ;
 And in the distance, gleaming bright
 Beneath the morning's rosy light,
 Imperial Chatsworth's palace hall,
 With golden lustre crowning all,
 In contrast mingling with the bowers
 Her shining walls and glittering towers,
 Like the mild radiance of the sun
 Ere well his rising has begun.

* * * * *

Such are the charms which thou canst boast,
 Fair Baslow !—such thy beauteous host ;
 And long as Nature shall dispense
 The bounteous gifts of Providence—
 Long as the trees put on their green,
 And landscapes glow with Summer's sheen—
 While rivers murmur as they run,
 And fountains sparkle in the sun,
 And mountain heath and garden bloom
 Their tints perennial resume,
 Thine e'er shall be a chosen seat—
 A fond Arcadian retreat—
 A cherish'd, honour'd, favour'd spot,
 By none who know thee e'er forgot ;—
 A land of luxury and ease,
 Of joy and hope, of health and peace !

About 1850.



“THE BRIDGE” AT SCARBOROUGH.

(After Longfellow.)

I stood on the Bridge at Scarbro',
When the bells were chiming noon,
And strains of melodious music
Came up from the Spa-Saloon.

I watched the rippling motion
Of that ever restless tide,—
Not only the tide of Ocean
But of human life beside.

I saw the gay procession
Pass by me to and fro,
Of wealth, and rank, and fashion,
Of youth and beauty too.

I marked each type of manhood,
Each charm of female grace,
And all the variations
Of feature, form, and face.

I saw the happy children
At play upon the sands,
Wading to snatch the sea-weed,
With feet as bare as hands.

I heard the merry voices
Of bathers in the sea,
And as I watched their gambols
Stray thoughts came over me.

How often ! oh, how often
In the days that have gone by,
Had I stood on that bridge at noon-day
When hopes were young and high—

When gazing upon that Castle,
So rugged, and yet so fair,—
I was building in fervid fancy
Castles my own, in the air !

How often in my childhood
Had I looked upon that sea,
And thought of its depth and distance
With awe and mystery !

And in the time of boyhood—
That hungry time of youth !
When a luncheon of cakes and oysters
Told only one half the truth !

Then came the days of courtship—
Of poetry and love,
And the sentimental nonsense
I talked in yonder grove.

And now I'm called "the Governor"
By a troop of grown-up sons,
And my friends will write me "senior"
Who wrote me "junior" once.

And the girl to whom I whispered
That nonsense years ago—
She is Materfamilias, Uxor—
My lover, and mistress too !

I often have asked the question—
Was I happier as a boy,
With my lollipops, cakes, and oysters,
Than now, in my married joy ?

Was youth, and zest, and freedom
Sweeter than wedlock now ?
That life has its compensations
Is the only reply I know.

I would that all the thousands
Who have cross'd this bridge to-day
May have cares as light as mine are,
And as soon to pass away.

And, like that tranquil ocean,
That hath borne its share of strife,
May they outlive each commotion,
And every storm of life !

July 18th, 1871.



THE PAUPER ANGLER, ALIAS "THE HERMIT."

(*Fact, not Fiction.*)

Beside an old hovel, form'd out of a cave
In a quarry that lay in the midst of a wood,
Hard by a canal, that did sluggishly lave
The bracken and rushes that margin'd its flood,

I met an old fisherman baiting his lines—
They were night-lines, he said, for the capture of eels,
And I saw by his face unmistakable signs
He had known the privations that poverty feels.

And yet he was cheerful, and smiled with delight
As he show'd me a potful of worms he had found,
For they, like the fish, had been scarce till to-night,
A shower having tempted them up from the ground.

I asked where he dwelt, and how long he'd been here :
He pointed his hand to the hovel descried,
And said, "For two months I have been living *there* ;
Would you like to walk in ? There's a fire inside."

I enter'd the hole, for there was not a door,
And found myself soon in a dark-looking lair,
With a rude-fashion'd hearth, and some logs on the floor,
Which he said formed his sofa, his bed and his chair.

He showed me his larder—a shelf on the rock,
On which was a saucepan, a crust, and a cup,
With a bundle of herbs, which he said was the “stock”
From which he brew’d liquor, tea, med’cine, and soup.

“Did he live there from choice ? Had he no other home ?”
Yes, the Workhouse in town was his winter abode ;
But in summer he left it, preferring to roam,
And live in the woods by his night-lines and rod.

“Did he live, then, on fish ? Were they plentiful here ?”
Not they ! Oft for days ne’er an eel could he ’tice.
What he *did* catch he managed to sell pretty dear,
Or exchange for a meal—he was not very nice.

“Was he lonely at all ?” Now and then in the night,
When he woke in the dark, and his fire had gone out ;
Or a wandering fox sometimes gave him a fright,
But a pipe of tobacco soon cleared off his doubt.

He was seventy turn’d, and a cutler by trade ;
And wifeless and childless, his life seem’d a blight ;
Yet he said he was happy so long as he’d bread—
A dinner of bacon was luxury quite.

How I envied that old man his simple content,
And thought how all wise and all good was His name
Who gives compensation where trials are sent,
And tempers the wind to the newly-shorn lamb !

Would they who have riches, and honour, and friends
Learn a lesson from him, the poor pauper bereft ;
And when age comes upon them, and life's summer ends,
Still be thankful and grateful for what there is left !

May 8th, 1869.



THE LITTLE SHOE-BLACK BOY.

I met a little ragged boy,
And dirty, too, was he ;
“ Clean your boots, sir ?” said the rogue,
“ They’re dirty, sir, like me.”
“ Ay, set to work : though black yourself
You seem a decent boy,
And tell me how it comes to pass
You follow this employ ?”

“ My father, sir, is out of work,
My mother’s ill at home,—
She goes a-washing when she’s well,
But that don’t often come ;
My sister Sue a tripe stall keeps,
And earns a crown a week,—
So I, you see, must do a bit,
Or else we’ve bread to seek.”

“ How many of you are there, then,
That to your home belong ?”
“ There’s seven beside the baby, sir,
And two of these are young.
My sister Poll she stays at home
To nurse the younger two,
And mother is so bad at times
That she wants nursing too.”

“ You say your father’s out of work—
Now tell the truth, I pray,
Is it that work’s so very scarce,
Or would he rather play ?”
“ Why, sir, I fear the truth is this—
He’s sadly fond of drink,
And when he’s on the spree, you see,
He’ll neither work nor think.”

“ And have you ever been to school,
And can you read or write ?”
“ I went a while on Sundays, sir,
And once or twice at night ;
I learnt to read a bit, and then
When mother took so bad,
I got no decent clothes to wear ;
They pawn’d the few I had.”

“ And how much can you earn a week
In blacking boots and shoes ?”
“ Why, sir, it varies very much,
As luck and weather choose ;
A penny is my reg’lar charge,
To work for that I’m willing,
But when I meet a gent like you
I sometimes get a shilling.”

“ Suppose, now, I should give you one,
What with it would you do ?”

“ I’d lend it, sir, to sister Sue,
And she would make it two ;
For Sue, sir, is an honest girl,
And brings home all she earns,
And more the capital she has,
The better her returns.”

I risked the shilling—“ Here, my boy,
I’ll trust your honest face,
And if deceived, I’ll try no more
The signs of truth to trace.”

* * * *

The only time I ever saw
That little boy again,
Was tossing halfpence in a crowd,
On Sunday, up a lane.



“MY RIVER”—

(THE DERBYSHIRE DERWENT.)

The River I love is a changeable one,
 Like a lovely woman with will of her own,
 Fickle and fair, and inconstant ever,
 Seldom the same two minutes together ;
 Yet in all her tempers and moods and ways
 Beautiful always, where'er she strays ;
 And though I have followed her half a life,
 In shade and shine, in storm and strife,
 In all her wanderings up and down,
 Through cowslip meadow or moorland brown,
 I love her as much in my manhood's prime
 As I did in my youthful, gushing time !

Sometimes she will stray like a wayward child,—
 Through rocky glens or woodlands wild,
 Tumbling and foaming with noise and spray
 As though impatient to bound away ;—
 Turning a summersault here and there,
 As she leaps down a fall, cascade, or weir ;
 And then as she comes to a smoother bed
 Where the rounded pebbles are thickly spread,
 Checking her speed and impetuous course,
 As she kisses each stone with a gentle force,

And laughs and ripples, and sighs and sings,
As she trifles and toys with a hundred things ;—
Till the pastime o'er and the shallows run—
For awhile she is grave and shy as a nun.

Now in a deep and silent still,
Beside a wooded and sloping hill,
She lingers fondly, and seems to sleep,
While the trees above her a vigil keep ;—
Whose waving boughs and forms of grace
Are mirror'd upon her glassy face,
While joyous birds with continuous strain
Sing over her couch a sweet refrain ;
And wild flowers, clustering thick and rank,
Waft their perfume from bank to bank,
And here and there, in a shady nook,
The angler looks on and baits his hook ;
—This is the mood I love her in best—
Calm and serene, as a child at rest.

And then sometimes on a summer's day,
As through green meadows she winds her way,
And seems so happy and lazy and still,
(Almost too lazy to turn the mill),
When a thunder-storm breaking overhead
Will rouse her at once from her peaceful bed ;
And then she will suddenly swell with rage,
And on all around fierce war will wage,
And froth and foam and tear along

Like a furious Amazon swift and strong,
 O'erflowing banks and uprooting trees,
 And whirling their trunks about with ease ;
 Reckless of beauty and joy and life
 In the passionate rage of her sudden strife !

* * * * *

—You ask, do I love her in this wild mood ?
 This roaring torrent and turbid flood ?
 Oh yes—for I know when her temper's o'er
 What a rich reward she will have in store ;
 And soon as she gently settles down,
 And her foam subsides to an amber brown,
 How the trout will rise to my tempting fly
 When the sun shines forth from to-morrow's sky :
 And I shall have sport that will much repay
 Many a bad and unlucky day.
 Yes—yes, I love her in every mood,—
My river she is—in calm or flood,
 And when I no longer can cast a fly
 I'll love her for sake of the days gone by !



In Memoriam.

JOHN HOLLAND,

*Author of "Sheffield Park, a Poem;" "Flowers from Sheffield Park,"
"Hopes of Matrimony, &c., &c."*

Died December 28th, 1872, aged 79.

"Call it not vain; they do not err
Who say that when the Poet dies
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies;
Who say, tall cliff and cavern lone
For the departed bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill,
That flowers in tears of balm distil—
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks in deeper groans reply;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave."

* * * * *

Thus sang the minstrel of the North,—
And shall not Hallamshire break forth
In grief for her departed son—

Her bard—and last remaining one—
Whose muse for half a century long
Has hymned her praise in ceaseless song—
Whose harp has never been unstrung,
Nor once upon the willow hung.
Ah! could these native rocks and hills,
These winding streams and mountain rills,
Moorlands and woodlands, dells and groves,
And all the haunts a poet loves—
With every flower that skirts the way,
And every bird that trills a lay,
Give utterance in voice like ours,
Would they not cry, rocks, woods, and flowers,
“Alas, alas! a friend is gone,
The dearest, truest, ever known,
Whose fond affection never changed,
As oft his wandering footsteps ranged
Our scenes among, through every stage
From hopeful youth to hoary age;
Farewell, farewell, a long farewell,”
The wail would ring from dell to dell.

* * * * *

Poet of nature! though thy name
May never reach immortal fame,
And of thy townsmen few indeed
Thy choicest gems will ever read,
Gems that were valued in their day
By generations passed away;

Yet still of those now left behind,
That knew thy worth of soul and mind—
The pure devotion of thy heart
To science, literature, and art,
And all things beautiful and good
In town or country, street or wood ;—
Thy simple grace, and blameless life,
Free from the cares of vulgar strife ;
Thy fervent piety and zeal
In all that touch'd thy neighbours' weal—
The very quaintness of thy dress
In its unstudied carelessness—
To these at least thy name will be
A fondly-cherished memory ;
And as the Christmas time comes round,
When sweet remembrances abound,
(That season which so oft thy muse
With love has sought to interfuse)
Amid the gay and festive scene
They e'er will keep that memory green.



CHRISTMAS EVE: A REVERIE.

CHRISTMAS EVE! Again another—
 Ah! how quick upon the other;
 How life's journey hurries on,
 Every stage a shorter one!
 How the distance lessons yearly,
 And the change is marked less clearly,
 While the milestones come so fast,
 Ere we note them, they are past!

"Sic mutantur et mutamur,"
 Man, at best, is but a dreamer,
 And the dreams come sometimes true—
 Often false, and never new.

Musing thus, a thoughtful mood in,
 O'er the past and present brooding,
 Back reclining in my chair,
 In my domum's snuggest lair—
 Smoking in contented ease
 My accustomed pipe of peace,
 I sit out the blessed Eve,
 Loth to take my midnight leave
 Loth to quit the cheerful rays
 Of the yule fire still a-blaze,
 Breathing forth at every puff
 Christian sentiments enough—
 Peace, good-will, and charity,

Open hospitality,
Good intentions and resolves
Which the season now involves :
Thinking, ever and anon,
Of the dear ones lately gone
To their cozy-curtained cots,
(Snowy white, with crimson spots)
Sleeping the serene repose
Happy childhood only knows.
Busy have they been to-day
Heralding their holiday ;
Garnishing the Christmas tree
With its gaudy gimcrackry,
Decorating high and low
With the festive mistletoe,
Laurel leaves, and arbor-vita,
Ivy, yew, and laurestina !

Ah ! What would our Christmas be
Unenlivened by their glee ?
With no merry voices ringing
All day long, like birds a-singing ;
With no busy, pattering feet
Telling of some hourly treat,
Snapdragon or raree-show,
Blind-man's-buff, or kissing bough !
Dull indeed would be the meal
That did not those forms reveal ;
Happy forms and happy faces



Radiant with a thousand graces—
Youth, and health, and appetite,
Spirits buoyant with delight.
But alas ! one tiny chair,
Vacant in the corner there,
Tells of one that's gone before,
And will fill it never more !
Ah ! methinks I see him now
With his alabaster brow,
Ruddy cheeks and golden hair,
Rounded limbs, so plump and fair,
As he sat upon my knee
Toying with my watch and key ;
Or as I last saw him, lying
In his mother's arms a-dying,
Grasping out his tender life
In an agony of strife !
Drop the curtain, draw the veil :
What will retrospect avail ?
He is gone, and we are left ;
He is happy, we bereft.
He has miss'd a world of pain
An angel's paradise to gain !
Hark ! the midnight chimes are ringing,
And the choristers are singing,
Bidding Christians to awake,
And for Christ their Saviour's sake,
To salute the blessed morn

When in Bethlehem He was born.
Ah ! what music so sublime
As that quaint old-fashioned rhyme,
Bursting in seraphic strains
O'er the dark and silent plains,
Telling us of days gone by
When to hear was ecstasy ;
And to listen—half asleep—
Wond'ring whence the echoes sweep
(While the rosy-vision'd dreams
Linger'd yet in golden gleams)
Was a rapture and a joy
Only known to girl or boy !
Still the music gives us pleasure,
And our spirits in a measure
Feel the influence of its power
At this solemn midnight hour.
Others, too, will hear its strain,
Some with gladness, some with pain ;
Some in mansions fill'd with mirth,
Where the revel still holds forth ;
Some in hovels cold and squalid,
Grim with want—with sickness pallid ;
Some on beds of downiest feather,
Some in rags scarce held together—
Crouch'd in doorways, glad to find
Passing shelter from the wind ;
Some with dear relations round them,



Others 'reft of all that bound them
Unto earth ! of husbands, sons,
Fathers, brothers, cherish'd ones,—
Weeping for the untimely dead,
Whose hard toil supplied their bread,—
Hurried off, without a warning,
As upon that fearful morning
When in Edmunds' fiery Main
Fifty at a stroke were slain !

Let us, then, to whom kind Heaven
Hath the better portion given,
Think of those who only know
Sorrow, suffering, and woe,
And as far as we are able
Help the poor man's scanty table ;
Cheer the widow's aching heart,
And espouse the orphan's part ;
Lend our sympathetic aid
To distress of every grade.

Midnight past ! 'tis Christmas morning,
And the fire, now dimly burning,
Warns me it is time at least
Christians should retire to rest,
Ere they join the salutation
Of this day's great jubilation.

So I'll bid the world adieu
For a fleeting hour or two,
And in dreamland wander back
Through each well-remembered track,
Where, in sunshine and in shade,
Once my boyish footsteps stray'd.

Lock the door—"put out the light—"
Dearest friends, good night, good night!

Christmas, 1861.



“OLD BUTCHER.”

(A Derbyshire Character; the “Walton” of the Peak.

Old Butcher is young : though he's nigh fourscore
He can tramp twelve miles across a moor ;
He can fish all day and wade up stream,
And at night as fresh as the morning seem.

Old Butcher is young ; he can make a fly
With as steady a hand and as sure an eye
As though he were still in manhood's prime,
And never had known the ravage of time.

He will drink his glass, and despoil a dish,
With an appetite keen as any fish
That ever took grub from his baited hook
When hunger its victim overtook.

He can spin a yarn, or a sermon preach,
Or on special occasions spout a speech ;
He can fast or feast, like a monk of old,
Though he likes the latter much best I'm told.

In the summer time when the days are long,
He will rise with the lark at her matin song ;
But never a day's too long for him
When wetting his line by the river's brim.

Yet on winter nights, when the weather's cold,
And fuel and victuals as scarce as gold,
He will dress his flies in his moorland cot,
And live on potatoes, and murmur not.


He knows each pool of the streams about,
And every stone that conceals a trout ;
Some say that he knows all the fish as well,
Both where they were born and where they dwell.

To those who have wander'd in Baslow's vale
Through Chatsworth's meadows and Darley Dale,
Or skirted the banks of the silvery Wye,
Where Haddon's grey towers rise steep and high ;

Or straying westward by Calver's weir
To Hathersage, Hope, or Edale fair
Where the Noe and the Derwent wind at will,
Beneath the shadow of great Win-Hill ;

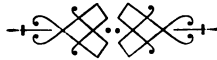
His form and garb will familiar seem
As the guardian diety of the stream,
With his oval face and his grizzly locks,
And his smile like that—of a sly old fox.

His vocation is, to instruct the young
Noviciates how the fly is flung ;
To rig their tackle and range their flies,
And show them where to obtain a rise.



Lòng may he live to pursue his art,
For few are there left to succeed his part ;
And when he is gone let his epitaph be—
“ Here lies George Butcher ; rare fisherman he ! ”

January 21, 1875.



THE STREET SINGER.

(Fact, not Fiction.)

The east wind blew a bitter blast,
 The night was dark and wet ;
 The driving sleet fell thick and fast,
 And every one you met
 Hurried along the dreary street,
 Too glad to reach a safe retreat.

I heard a voice—a woman's voice,
 More shrill than sweet, I own,
 Shrieking a ditty that for noise
 Surpass'd all I had known ;
 And then I heard *another* wail,
 A child's, that told a sadder tale.

I hastened on, and soon beheld
 A woman ragg'd and red,
 And in her brawny arms she held
 A boy that seem'd half dead,
 Shivering beneath the icy sleet
 That numb'd his little hands and feet.

I ask'd her if it was indeed
 A stern necessity
 To take a child like that to plead
 Her tale of poverty ;
He could not help to sing—so why
 Expose *him* thus ; except to die !



“He'll soon come round ; he's oft a fit
Of crying just at first ;
The cold, you see, has nipt his feet ;
We'd go, sir, if we durst,
But till we've got enough to pay
Our lodging we are forc'd to stay.”

“Here, follow me ; I cannot bear
A child like this be found
Starving to death in open air,
With shelter all around.”
I led them to a neighbouring inn,
And order'd food and fire within.

I told the landlord to provide
Some supper for the two,
And most of all a warm fireside ;
I left them money too.
The woman thank'd me o'er and o'er,
And said that night she'd sing no more.

I left them and pursu'd my way,
Brooding on human woe,
And all the miseries that lay
Around, where'er we go ;
And as I closed my office door,
Thank'd God he had not made *me* poor

But sweeter still is the whiff
Of our morning pipe's first fume,
As it curls from the bowl of our two-inch clay,
The sweetest of all perfume ;

Fish ! fish ! fish !
The noontide heat all through,
If the fish won't bite, the horseflies will
And gnats and midges too ;
And now and then we bite ourselves
At the baits our wives did pack us,
And wet *our* line, from the throat to the spine,
With the liquids that ne'er lack us ;

Oh, ye who scoff and sneer,
And think it a senseless thing
To sit the whole day like I won't say what,
At the end of a stick and a string ;
Little know ye of the joys sublime,
The ecstacies that lie
In watching the trill of our cork or quill,
When a nibbling fish goes by.

Fish ! fish ! fish !
Oft fifty in a row,
For we have a famous Angling Club,
As all the world doth know ;



And we do fish for a double dish,
Assured that if we catch
A pound of gudgeon, perch, or eel,
We win a prize to match.

And lest our zeal grow slack
The fishing days between,
We freshen it up with a weekly cup
And supper at our inn :
And there we catch our fish again
In a free and easy flow,
And throw a longer line by far
Than ever we did in our finny war,
And draw a longer bow !

In sunshine, storm, and rain ;
In heat and cold, and wind,
From the dawn of the day to the dusk of the night,
The fishermēn you will find,
Fish ! fish ! fish !
With hearts that never grow sick,
And hopes as light as the floats we watch,
Though deferred from week to week !



THE OLD HOUSE AT HOME.

There was lightness, there was brightness,
 In the dear old house at home,
 And the Christmas sun smiled gladly on
 Each holly-garnish'd room ;
 There were busy footsteps tripping
 In hospitable throng ;
 There were merry voices ringing
 With laughter and with song ;
 There were brothers, there were sisters,
 And a venerable sire,
 Whose kindling eyes beam'd welcome
 With a soft and tender fire ;
 And the Christmas dinner prosper'd
 With unalloy'd success,
 And the day was all too short by half
 For so much happiness !

* * * * *

There was sadness, and no gladness,
 In the dear old house at home,
 And the Christmas morn came greyly in
 With a cold and cheerless gloom ;
 No guests were there—no banquet,—
 No smiles to cheer the day ;



But every eye was moisten'd
With tears that would not stay ;
And stealthy footsteps trod the stairs,
And voices whisper'd low,
And anxiously they ask'd the news
They only fear'd to know !
And so the Christmas-day wore on,
Ah, wearily and slow,—
A day to be remember'd long,
Of bitterness and woe !

* * * * *

Desolation,—desecration,
Now reign around the place,
And the dear old house no longer
Has welcome on its face ;
The rude hands of the stranger
Its beauty hath effac'd,
And road and railway ruthlessly
Its sure destruction haste ;
The voice of him that greeted us
Can greet us there no more,
And the eyes are closed for ever
That beam'd on us before ;
And Christmas sheds a cold, cold look
On that deserted shrine ;
And I pass it with a sigh now,—
The home no longer mine !

THE MIDNIGHT FLOOD.


Referring to the bursting of the Bradfield Reservoir, which occurred March 11, 1864, by which 250 lives, and more than a quarter million of property were destroyed.

'Twas midnight ; and hamlet, and village, and town
Were resting in peace from the toils of the day,
And each weary cotter had laid himself down
Secure, in his fancy, from every prey.

And there lay his little ones, mother and all,
Sleeping the sleep only innocence knows,
Dreaming of pleasures that childhood befall :
Of games left unfinished at yesterday's close.

Ah ! little reck'd they of the wind as it raved
And roar'd at the casement and batter'd the door ;
Full many a storm their snug cottage had braved,
And oft in the night they had heard it before.

The cattle were hous'd, and in stable and stall
Lay stretched the live products of many a farm ;
And they, like their masters, were slumbering, all
Unconscious of danger—unused to alarm.



But hark! What is that? Something more than the rave
Of the hurricane-blast as it sweeps down the moor,
Something more than the rush of the rain-swollen wave
Of the mountain-stream rolling its course at the door!

Is it thunder? or earthquake? that ominous sound!
Now startling the slumberer's terrified ear,
Growing louder and louder, and "hissing" around,
Till the stout-hearted quail with an ill-defined fear!

No time for reflection;—before they can think,
The deluge is on them—around them—within
The doors of their cottages, up to the brink
Of the beds that they lie on;—with horrible din,

Like the crash of artillery,—homestead and cot,
And all that belong them are swept by the flood,
Till scarcely a vestige remains of the spot
To show the old landmark and point where it stood!

And then rose the shriek and wild cry of despair
Of women in agony, clasping their young!
And panic-struck men, e'er they murmur'd a prayer,
Borne, helpless to save, the fierce waters along!

In vain are their struggles—the merciless foe
Spares father, nor mother, nor children, nor wife:
But one and another, it drags them below,
Till scarcely a witness is left of the strife!

But here and there one, like a mariner wreck'd,
Is seen at the dawn of that terrible morn,
Still clinging for life to some gable erect
That had stood out the torrent—a ruin forlorn !

Oh God ! 'twas a sight causing angels to sigh
As they gazed on that ghastly and desolate scene,
Which daylight revealed to the awe-stricken eye,
Where death and destruction so lately had been !

The hamlet—the village—the populous town—
So busy, so peaceful, till yesterday night,—
Now wild as a desert, with ruins o'erthrown,
A bleak, howling wilderness, shunning the light !

Is it God's work, or man's, this calamity dire ?
We wait for the answer ; but stay not our hand
To give and to help, with a longing desire
To mitigate horror we could not withstand !

March 18, 1864.



THE MIDNIGHT MAIL.

Through the darkness and the downpour
Of the black and stormy night ;
Through the blinding and the driving
Of the tempest in its might ;
Over viaducts and bridges,
And embankments' giddy ridges ;
Over hideous abysses
Where the foaming torrent hisses ;
Into tunnels madly plunging,
Rattling, shrieking, roaring, lunging,
Like a demon of the gale—
Onward flies the midnight mail !

Past the lonely country station,
Shivering beneath the shock,
Where the pointsman's gibbet signal
Doth its spectral arms unlock ;
Past lone hamlets without number,
Buried deep in peaceful slumber ;
Past the populated town
With its gaslit suburbs strewn ;
And then over field and meadow,
Through the forest's deepest shadow,

And across the darkling river
Where the dark waves dimly quiver—
Through the hill and o'er the dale—
Onward speeds the midnight mail !

Onward, onward—'spite the darkness—
Wind and rain and fog despite—
What cares it for storm and tempest,
Laden with its precious freight ?
Passengers of every station,
Every country and vocation,
Noble, simple, gentle, poor,—
Statesman, lawyer, bishop, boor,
High-born dame and lowly maiden,
Tourist, traveller, and tradesman ;
All in cushion'd ease reposing,
Sleeping tranquilly or dozing,
As though couch'd on beds of feather,
Roof'd and hous'd from wind and weather,
Little heeding, little caring,
Though the train is madly tearing
Through a hundred perils' power
Forty miles at least an hour !

Ah, what treasure, trouble, pleasure
In that mail-van flies along—
News of gladness, and of sadness—
Right to some, to others wrong !

Onward speed, then ! Heaven guard it,
Let not storm or night retard it ;
For a thousand eyes now sleeping
Wait the secrets in its keeping,
And the postman's ring to-morrow
Will to them bring joy or sorrow ;
But should aught of ill betide it,
And the precious freight inside it,
Ah ! what wail of consternation
Would be heard throughout the nation—
What bright homes would cease to gladden,
What light hearts would quickly sadden
As was read the startling tale—
“ Accident to midnight mail ! ”


March 14, 1873.



ALBERT MORTUUS.

Not in the mellow autumn of ripe age,
With harvest honours garner'd at his feet,—
Not at the close of life's accomplished stage,
The journey ended, and the work complete,
But in the midsummer of his career—
The bright meridian of manhood's prime—
He fell amongst us, stricken like a deer
By hand invisible—before his time ;
Leaving a nation, stagger'd at the blow,
To mourn, aghast, the noble work undone ;—
Mingling its tears in sympathetic flow
With widow'd royalty, on yonder throne ;
Whilst every lip that ever lisp'd a prayer
Invokes the King of kings' protection *there!*

Dec. 23. 1861.



CLASSICAL CAROLS.

*(Dedicated to David Parkes, Esq., after a lecture from him on the
Hallamshire Dialect.)*

NO. I.—CHAUCERIAN HALLAMSHIRE.

Betty, mo lass, it's Christmas-eve,
To-morrow's Christmas-day,
And thee and me mun mak believe
To hev a holiday.

It's true we've had enough of late—
Six weeks wi' nowt to do ;
And holiday's a sorry mate
When there's no wage to draw.

It's true we've ne'er a drop o' beer,
To mak our hearts grow merry ;
But t'watter's sweet, and ' tap is near,
And tay's refreshing, very.

We've nother turkey, gam, nor goose,
And scarce a pike o' meit ;
But, thank the Lord, we've hunger sauce
To flavour what we eit :

We've health and strength, and though we're poor,
We've childer, good as gowd ;
They'll never see us want, o'm sure,
Nah we are getting owd.

There's Jimmy coming hoam to-neet,
And Moll fust thing i't morn ;
Yo'll see, wes't raise a pudding yet,
Sure as them two were born !

For, though their wages are but small—
Not quoite a craan a-piece—
Bless 'em, they bring us nearly all,
To do wi' as we please !

It's true there's not a lump o'coil
On t'arston fire to blaze ;
But there's some sleek and smudge i't hoile,
Thank God, a *reek* we'll raise.

And heven't oi t' sweetest little woif
As ivver cutler wed ;
God bless her ! long as shoo has loif
Oi'll nivver wish me dead.

We've had some struggles in ar time,
And toil'd and moil'd together,
Up hill and dahn—in weet an fine,
And every kind o' weather.



And bravely, lass, tha's borne thy share,
 For better and for worse ;
 And leeten'd me o' many a care
 That might hev been my curse.

A kiss, mo lass, this blessed eve,
 Beneath the sprig o' holly ;
 Whoile tha art by my side, believe,
 Oi'll ne'er be melancholy !

Oi'll share mo Christmas crust wi' thee,
 And thank the Lord for that ;
 And ne'er a murmur come from me
 Whoil tha art still mo mate !



CLASSICAL CAROLS,

No. 2.—TENNYSONIAN HALLAMSHIRE.

Fill up the glass ; pass on the wine ;
 This day our hearts should ne'er be sad,—
 Of all the year they should be glad ;
 Fill up the glass ; pass on the wine !

This ruby port of vintage fame
 Is from the store our sires secured ;
 While they have slept, it has matured,
 We drink it "in memoriam."

Yet not to Bacchus will we drink,
 Nor pledge the toast in drunken noise ;
 Not in the Wassail be our joys,
 But let our mirth with wisdom link.

'Tis meet that we should merry be,
 'Tis right that we should drink the toast,
 "The living loved," "The loved and lost,"
 Yet not in thoughtless revelry.

These Christmas days that come their round,
 So quickly now, and year by year,
 Quicker and quicker still appear—
 Bring thoughts that need not to be drowned—

Thoughts that embrace the widest range
Of childhood, boyhood, youth, and age,
The length of life's long pilgrimage,
Through every turn and every change.

And sweet it is, in table talk,
Those bygone seasons to recall,
And "keep the memory green" of all
Who shared with us life's early walk :

Those dear companions of the past,
So cherish'd once—now half forgot,
Their jokes, their tales remembered not,
Their very features waning fast !

And so, full soon, 'twill be with us,
When we, like them, shall pass away ;
And those dear children now at play
Shall talk, and moralize on us.

Ah ! little do they think or care,
How soon those future days will come
When they will muse on friends and home,
And joys they never more will share.

Fill up the glass ! one bumper more,
We'll drink it, too, with three times three,
"Our children, and our heirs to be ;"
God bless them ! now and evermore !

Christmas, 1869.

TO NOVEMBER.—ON ITS DEPARTURE.

Oh wretched month ! Oh season of despair !
 Of dismal doubts, and dull, desponding care ;—
 Of green-eyed melancholy—madness—mumps,
 Coughs, asthmas, colds, sore throats, and **aching stumps** ;
 Dyspepsia—hypochondria—and all
 The morbid miseries that man befall ;
 Sunless and flowerless, desolate and damp,
 Thy dews a drizzle, and thy fields a swamp ;
 Thy forests leafless, and thy landscapes bare,
 Thy sky a fog—impervious everywhere ;
 Farewell—a long farewell—thou dreary month !
 My nerves abhor thee—as my body shunn'th !

* * * * *

How have I 'scaped thy horrors—how surviv'd
 Thy muggy days, and weary nights, yet liv'd ?
 Surely it was the memory of the past,
 And hopes of better days to come at last,—
 The pleasant thoughts of summer days gone by,
 Of daisied turf, bright suns, and cloudless sky—
 Of gardens spangled with a thousand flowers,
 Of full-leaf'd trees, and blossom-weighted bowers ;
 Of gentle zephyrs, wafting fragrant smells
 From clover meadows, and from cowslip dells ;
 Of winding streams, and sylvan solitudes,
 Sequester'd lanes, where seldom man intrudes ;
 Of birds and bees, and the delightful hum
 Of happy insect life, no longer dumb !

These are the thoughts that keep me still alive,
And cheer my heart, when oft despair would drive
My soul to madness : so, foul fiend, avaunt !
Ye blue dyspeptic devils, cease to haunt
My dull, disorder'd brain ! Come heavenly hope,
And to my fancy give a wider scope ;
And though I may not look for spring-time yet—
Woo the soft breeze, or cull the violet,—
Though weeks and months of winter still remain,
Let me regard them in a livelier vein ;
Not as thy squalid offspring, O November !
But the blythe sons and daughters of December ;—
Crisp, sparkling morns, bright noons, and frosty nights,
O'er which a million stars diffuse their lights ;
Transparent skies—invigorating air ;
Nature's best tonic—antidote of care ;
With merry Christmas knocking at the door,
To cheer and bless us in a few weeks more ;
Restoring genial gladness to our hearth,
And to our hearts a long-forgotten mirth ;
Dispelling all remembrance of the past,
The clouds and darkness o'er November cast :
The gloomy fears—the misery and mud—
The unstrung nerves,—the ill-condition'd blood,—
Giving new life—new spirits—new desires—
Enkindling once again the nigh-quenched fires.
Oh, pleasing thought ! delightful hope remain !
My spleen is o'er—" Richard's himself again !"

Nov. 29th, 1860.

FAREWELL, OLD YEAR !

Farewell, Old Year !—and yet thou art not old ;
It seems but yesterday since thou wert born,
When merry bells thy welcome advent told,
And kindly greetings heralded thy morn ;
Yet thou hast run thy full appointed course ;
Fulfill'd thy destiny for woe or weal ;
Brought millions forth, for better or for worse ;
And millions launch'd into the “ land of leal.”
And now we let thee go with scarce a tear—
A little sadness p'rhaps on thy last day—
And then the sigh is chang'd into a cheer :
“ Ring out the old, ring in the new,” we say ;
So 'twill be said of us when we are gone—
Our end accomplish'd, and our duties done.

A CONVERSAZIONE OF THE LITERARY
AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Oh ye, who sip the sacred rill
Of wisdom and sobriety,
Who sup on science, or a grill
Of flints and fossils, at the Phil-
Osophical Society !

What pleasant meetings have ye still,
Ye literary moiety !
What conversaziones fill
Your learned leisure at the Phil-
Osophical Society !

How many hours of intel-
Lectual variety,
I've passed among ye at the drill
Ye yearly give us at the Phil-
Osophical Society.

Oh, sweet reunions of the dil-
Ettantes of not'riety !
Such " Noctes " knew I not, until
I was a member of the Phil-
Osophical Society !

And sweet the converse of those thril-
Ling daughters of propriety,
Who talk of acids, salts, and sil-
Ica, and words that make you chill
From lips less fair, than at the Phil-
Osophical Society !

In art or science, what you will,
You'll find all contrariety,—
Breech-loading guns, and missals il-
Luminated by the quill
Of monks of old—seen at the Phil-
Osophical Society !

Oh, such a never-failing bill-
Of-fare for sages' joyety ;
Old Wedgwood ware, and shot and shell,
And 'scopes of every kind, to tell
Life's mysteries—all at the Phil-
Osophical Society !

And curiosities of steel,
Of parchment, and of piety,—
Of ancient manuscripts on vel-
Lum, books so queer, they make you feel
You've much to learn yet, at the Phil-
Osophical Society !

To you, dear J., and C., and W—ll,*
Philosophers of high degree ;
A thousand thanks for all your zeal,
Your courtesy, and kind good will,
In cat'ring for us at the Phil-
osophical Society !

February 1, 1867.

* John Holland, Clifton Sorby, and William Baker are here referred to.



THE DEATH OF HAVELOCK.

Weep for the brave—the bravest of the brave !
Let Britain weep, and India, o'er his grave,
Weave the sad chaplet, plant the sacred tree,
And raise the shrine to hallow'd memory !
Oh, Havelock ! 'twas a glorious thing to die
After a work like thine ; to hear the cry
Of succour'd captives, rescued from despair,
Pouring to God and thee their grateful prayer ;
Of helpless mothers and their infant brood,
Sav'd by thy hand and purchas'd by thy blood ;
Glorious for thee ! but for thy country sad,
Who scarce had known the valiant son she had—
Scarce recompensed thy long-neglected claim,
And paid the just reward of wealth and fame ;—
When, lo ! thou diest—honours come too late,
And Britain mourns thy unpropitious fate :
Mourns that she may not welcome back her son,
And crown him with the laurels he has won.

Jan. 12, 1858.

CHRISTMAS, 1870,

IN GAUL AND ALBION.

(Written during the Franco-Prussian War and the Siege of Paris.)

“Peace upon earth! Goodwill to man!”
 Such was the reign that Christ began,
 When on Judea’s star-lit plain
 The Shepherds heard that heav’nly strain,
 Breaking the stillness of the night,
 While Angel hosts appear’d in sight,
 Proclaiming with celestial voice
 The tidings glad, “Fear not, rejoice!
 For unto you, this blessed morn,
 The promis’d Saviour, Christ, is born;
 A Prince of Peace, a King of Kings,
 That to the world salvation brings!”

* * * * *

Though eighteen hundred years have fled
 Since first this joyful message sped,
 And tens of millions have since then
 Caught up the melody again,
 “Peace upon earth, goodwill to men,”—
 How many millions still remain
 Who ne’er have own’d this King divine,
 Or his beneficent design?
 Who still believe that bloody fight
 Should regulate the laws of right,
 And Fire, and Pestilence, and Sword

The only settlement afford ;
 Who laugh to scorn the tidings given
 That Christmas morn—direct from Heaven !

* * * * *

Oh, would to God this reign of Peace
 Would bring unhappy Gaul release !
 Restrain the greedy dogs of war
 That hunt her victims, near and far ;—
 Restore the sabre to its sheath,
 And all the implements of death ;—
 Bind up the ghastly wounds that lie
 Expos'd before each pitying eye,
 And soothing consolation bring
 To all this people's suffering !

* * * * *

This hallowed eve, when every hearth
 Commemorates the Saviour's birth—
 And England, happy, safe, and free
 (Safe by that "silver streak of sea"),
 Rejoices in each cheerful hall
 At the returning festival ;
 And, in the fulness of its joy,
 Doth each luxurious art employ
 To enhance the hospitable rites
 That custom bids on Christmas nights,—
 Let grateful prayers to Heav'n ascend
 For all the blessings that descend
 On this small speck of island, known



As free, enlighten'd Albion,
Whose ocean ramparts rise and swell,
A fortress all impregnable.

* * * * *

Again the festive board is spread,
Again the merry-makings made,
Again the friends of youth and age
Perform the yearly pilgrimage,
And meet together at the home
Whence all their Christmas longings come;
And while we join the happy throng,
And strive to share the laugh and song,
There comes a sickness of the soul
That makes the pleasures sad withal,
As we remember all the woes—
The untold agonies and throes
That now afflict that gallant race,
Renown'd in every art and grace—
A nation rear'd in luxury
And all the pride of chivalry,
Whose beauteous capital hath been
The pride of Europe and her Queen—
Whose fertile plains and valleys rich
Yield everything that man can wish,
Like ancient Israel's Palestine,
A land of honey, corn, and wine,
Ah, what a Christmas-time is there!
What desolation and despair;

What ruined homes, and broken shrines,
 The war-fiend's unmistaken signs !
 What widows waiting for the dead,
 What orphans vainly asking bread ;
 What wounded, sick, and dying men,
 With none to cheer or comfort them !
 Their little all for ever gone,
 And scarce a cup to call their own !

* * * * *

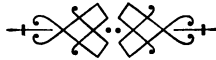
Oh, God ! how long shall these things be,
 This thirst of blood and butchery ?
 How long shall wars despoil the earth,
 And turn fertility to dearth ;
 Leading their victims to the field
 Like sheep to shambles—to be killed ?
 Permitting devilries that make
 The very brutes with terror quake,
 And look with pity and with scorn
 On man's degraded state forlorn !
 Oh speed the promised peaceful time
 When battles, murder, sin, and crime
 Shall be as relics of the past—
 Of barb'risms for ever cast ;
 When " Peace upon the earth " shall be
 A truth and a reality ;—
 And " goodwill " universal reign
 From " pious King " * to vulgar swain ;

* Referring to the Emperor of Germany, often styled the " Pious King."



When Teuton conquerors shall know
How gentle mercy to bestow,
And spare the prostrate foe that lies
Beneath their feet—too weak to rise ;
When all the world shall bow the knee
To Him Whose advent-mystery
This day with anthems we proclaim,
Singing Hosannahs to His name.

December 23, 1870.



A CITY OF THE DEAD.

REFLECTIONS IN THE CEMETERY.


I sought a grave—a long-forgotten grave,
Neglected now some score of years or more—
Where once I planted flowers, and sought to save
The weeds and grass from rudely growing o'er.

'Twas in a public cemetery—then
But thinly tenanted—graves here and there ;
And this among a little group was seen
Conspicuous by its florist's tender care.

And now I found that little grave-plot grown
Into a crowded city of the dead,
Where tombstones thick as cottages were strewn
In lanes and alleys, labyrinthine spread.

And as I thread my way in solitude
Amidst that lonely crowd—anxious to find
The stone I sought—musing in sadden'd mood
Of fleeting time and perishing mankind,—

I read the names of hundreds, that recall'd
A bygone generation—names that were
Familiar to my ear in days of old,—
Forgotten now through many a changeful year :



Some who had figur'd on the stage of life,
And made themselves an evanescent fame ;
Some who with Fortune long had wag'd a strife,
And left behind them nothing but a name.

Of some I could recall the very tone—
The very look and gesture as they spoke—
And scarcely could believe the letter'd stone
That told how long since I had heard their joke.

And here and there were graves of recent date,
With head-stones new, or granite monument ;
And chaplets, with the flowers unfaded yet,
That told of tears unshed, and grief unspent.

And then I came upon a little tomb,
With short inscription,—merely of a child ;
And I recall'd a day of deepest gloom—
A Father's woe—a Mother's anguish wild.

Merciful time, that heals the sorest wound !
This was my thought as back to town I sped ;
And in the busy streets and life around
Full soon forgot the city of the dead.

February 9th, 1877.



THE RELIEF OF LUCKNOW.

JESSIE BROWN'S DREAM.

On the lap of her mistress she lay down to sleep,
By the garrison walls of beleaguer'd Lucknow ;
And the roar of the cannon, incessant and deep,
Disturb'd not poor Jessie's tranquillity now,—

For she dreamt as she lay of her dear Highland home,
In the green glens of Scotland, so far, far away ;
Where her father, she thought, from the ploughing had
come,
To rest from his toil at the close of the day.

So calmly she slumber'd, they let her sleep on,—
'Twas her first rest for days, and would perhaps be her
last,
For the brave little band was now nearly outdone,
With watching, and working, and fighting, and fast.

And the heathen outside, raging fierce with delay,
Now closer and thicker its multitudes pour,
Like wild beasts ferociously waiting their prey,
And gnashing their teeth for another Cawnpore.

But hark ! what is that ? A wild cry of surprise
From Jessie, upstanding, with hand to her ear ;
“ Oh ! dinna ye hear it ? we're savèd ! ” she cries ;
“ 'Tis the pipes o' auld Scotland—the slogan I hear ! ”

They look and they listen, but nothing is heard,
Save the roar of the muskets, and yell of the foe ;
And Jessie bewilder'd, excited, disturb'd,
Tries to slumber again, and dream away woe.

But scarce have her eyes clos'd, when, starting again,
With a cry of delight wilder still than before—
“ Oh ! *noo* do ye hear it ? I am no mista'en ;
Hark ! hark ! 'tis ' The Campbells are coming,' for
sure ! ”

Thank God ! it is true ; unmistakeably now
The pibroch's shrill notes are heard clear through
the roar ;
And hearts, long despairing, with gratitude glow,
As they hear the lov'd strains of their country once
more.

And the Campbell's *did* come, not with music alone,
But with Havelock and vengeance, to rescue the brave ;
At the hour when all hope of deliv'rance had gone,
And before them yawn'd deeply, a massacre grave.

Jan. 14, 1858.




THE STREET NEWS-GIRL.

Ragged and barefoot—
Young and yet old—
Sat on a door-step,
Out in the cold,
Out in the stormy night—
Snow, sleet, and rain—
A poor little news-girl
Shivers in vain.

Scarce ten years old is she—
Such a frail mite—
With face wan and hungry,
Though with eyes still bright ;
O'er her head an old garment
That once was a shawl,
And now serves for bonnet,
Hood, mantle, and all.

Nightly you see her there—
Or in the street,
Selling her " Evening Star's "
Halfpenny sheet ;
Now at a crossing, and
Now with a dart,
After an omnibus
Ready to start.



Should she run after you
Coaxing your trade,
Turn not away from her—
Give her your aid;
Take not the change from her,—
Give her the penny,
And a kind word or two,
If you have any.

Look at her, talk to her,
And you may find
Under her rags and dirt,
Something refin'd ;
Limbs lithe and active,
Features of grace,
Soft tender eyes, too, and
Innocent face.

Ask her the question,
Why she is there,
Earning so hardily
Such pitiful fare ?
Frankly she'll answer you
With her sweet voice,
The old tale of poverty,
Sickness and vice :

“ Mother an invalid,
Father a sot,
Six little mouths to fill,

Wages or not ;
I and my brother, earn
Tenpence a day,
Which for our victuals, sir,
Goes a long way."

What will *her* Christmas be,
How will she fare ?
Frugal her feast, I fear,
Scanty her share ;
A feast-day for others,
To *her* means a fast,
When one day's poor pittance
Has two days to last.

Say, ye philanthropists,
What shall be done ?
Rescue these children
Or leave them alone ?
Leave them to wander
In rags through the street,
Or stop them from gaining
The bread that they eat ?

While ye reflect on it,
Pray, one and all,
Give them a Christmas-box,
Ever so small !



Let them to-day at least
Wear a bright face,
And when to-morrow comes—
Ponder their case.

• *Christmas, 1876.*



SEASIDE RECREATIONS AT SCARBOROUGH.

Nothing to do, nothing to think of—
 Plenty to eat and more to drink of—
 Walking and talking—often smoking,—
 Everywhere peering, prying, and poking ;
 Reading the newspaper, stretched on a seat,
 Going to market to buy the meat ;
 Helping the children to dig in the sand,
 Then lying down in it, list'ning the band ;
 Wondering what to do with yourself next,—
 Then rousing up on a sudden pretext,—
 Just for a walk on the grand parade
 To see how the belles and beaux are array'd ;
 Meeting, perchance there, a feminine friend,
 Taking a turn with her on to the end,
 And, by way of variation,
 Having a very mild flirtation,
 Such as a married man may with propriety
 Indulge without shocking his wife or society—
 Just a gossip on seaside platitudes.
 Lodgings and lodgers and landladies' latitudes ;
 Babies and bathings, and dinner providing.—
 Matters important for daily deciding.

* * * *

Having a walk to the harbour or pier
 To see what the people are doing there ;

Watching the fishermen tar their boat ;
Bringing mementos away on your coat ;
Taking a pleasure trip out to sea—
Sick all the while and as ill as can be ;
Going to bathe in a sloppy machine,
Sobbing and shivering all the time in,
Thinking it good for the constitution
To be daily soaked in a salt solution ;
Watching excursionists take their delight in
The eating of crabs, and fishing for whiting ;
Having a tiresome march up a hill,
Then marching down with a very good will ;
Never forgetting the minute we dine,
And the pleasant hour after it, sacred to wine ;
Going to sleep in an easy chair
By an open window, with sea-view fair,
Dreaming of mermaids, naiads, and nymphs,
Till awoke by the fishwoman shrieking "shrimps."
Spending each night at some entertainment,
To give you pleasure by no means in vain meant ;
Then to bed with an easy mind—
At peace with the world and all mankind,
Till roused in the morning by sundry bawls
Of "Herrings! fresh herrings! soles! fine soles!"

* * * *

Such is the kind of recreation
We take at the sea-side in vacation ;
Such is the way we recruit our health

And ease our purse of its surplus wealth ;
Giving a rest to the over-wrought brain,
And to the stomach, I fear, a strain.
Reader ! If thou art man or maiden,
With a mind and a purse, overladen,
Betake thyself to some Spa or other—
Scarbro' will serve thee as well as another ;
Thy mind will be eased of its "perilous stuff,"
And thy purse made speedily light enough !



SONNET.

In Memoriam.

THOMAS ASLINE WARD.

Obit Nov. 26th, 1871. Ætat 90.

Like the calm sunset of a summer's day,
 When ne'er a storm disturbs the sky serene,
 And not a cloud obstructs the golden ray
 That sheds its dying lustre o'er the scene—
 Another gentle spirit sinks to rest,
 And ends a life that seldom knew a pain ;
 Of many a friend, and ne'er a foe possest,
 Through near a century's eventful reign.
 A man of books and literary lore,
 Who lov'd Minerva for Minerva's sake ;
 Whose mind a kingdom was of richest store,
 Clear and unruffled as the lucid lake ;
 In all his objects, modest, hopeful, sure,
 He liv'd in humble faith ; may all men die as pure !


THE EX-PARISH CLERK.

(His opinion on past and present, for which the Author is not responsible).

“ Ah, well! ah, well! they may say as they will,
But I'll hold to the same opinion still ;
These new-fangled ways will all come to nought,
With their chants and intones, and I know not what ;
As they rid the old clerk they'll rid parson next—
If they don't miss ' Amen,' they'll not miss the text.

“ Yes, the good old times of the Church are gone
When parson and clerk were like father and son,
The one up above and the other below,
In old-fashioned pulpits, unlike the things now,
Three, tier upon tier, in the orthodox fix
Like a butt, and a pipe, and a thirty-six.

“ There were none of your children in surplices then,
Squalling bad time in the place of full men :
The clerk led the singing, and cried the response
In a Christian-like tone, that did well for the nonce,
And the people all join'd in a reverent way
In all but ' Amen,' which they left *him* to say.




“ There were none of your free seats and Popery stuff,
Your chairs and your benches—back-breaking enough—
But well-cushion’d pews, where you’d room to turn round,
And the family group all together were found ;
Where the old ones could sit, and the young ones could
lie,
And all take a nap when the sermon was dry.

“ No fal-lal devices on altar and walls,
No bowing of priests, in their copes, capes, and shawls ;
No turning to east and intoning of creed,
And sing-songing parts which the clerk ought to read ;
But a good honest service in surplice and gown,
With the clerk’s loud ‘ Amen,’ prayers and sermon to
crown.

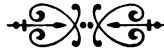
“ In my days, when I was clerk, sexton, and choir,
At ‘ Fenley-cum-Bogmoor,’ in Lincoln’s fam’d shire—
Ah ! then we had singing worth going to hear,
And *judges*, who knew what was what, here or there—
We had anthems and psalms of the old-fashion’d style,
With none of your organ to drown and to spoil.

“ Then at Christmas and feast-days we’d instruments such
As you seldom hear now, and play’d to a touch !
We had fiddle and flute, and bass and bassoon,
And clarionet, oboe, and trombone ;
Ah ! talk about organs—give me a good band,
And a *village* one too—the best in the land !



“ But the times have chang’d, and the people too ;
They know nought of singing as we used to do ;
And the next change will be, the old Church itself,
Will be serv’d like the Irish and laid on the shelf ;
As they rid the old clerk they’ll rid parson next—
If they don’t miss ‘Amen,’ they won’t miss the text ! ”

May 7th, 1875.



JOHN DOUGHTY'S CHRISTMAS DINNER.

A TALE OF THE PEAK.

Dame Doughty was busy on Christmas Eve,
 With chopper, and bowl, and grater, and sieve,
 Mixing together the suet and crumbs,
 The spice and the sugar, the peel and the plums,
 To aid the grand banquet of turkey and chine,
 From which on the morrow they all were to dine,
 With mince-meat, and sauces, and pudding beside ;
 All which the good-wife had that night to provide.

The children were watching with eager intent
 The wonderful process on which she was bent,
 Looking and longing with hungry eyes
 As she sliced up the peel and put lids on the pies ;
 Thinking how soon 'twould be their turn to work,
 Not only with hands, but with knife, spoon, and fork ;
 Pondering deeply the mode of attack,
 What to demolish, and how much to sack ;
 For dinner like this only came once a year,
 And Christmas to them was a day very dear !

John Doughty, the husband and tenant of house,
 (I dare not say master—no, that was his spouse,
 For she ruled the kitchen, the dairy, and cream,
 While John only reigned over stable and team),

Had gone to the market the butter to sell,
And a few little matters to purchase as well,
Some sugar, and coffee, and tea (superfine),
With a bottle of rum and another of wine,
To gladden the hearts and to heighten the mirth
Of the guests that to-morrow would honour his hearth.

The clock had struck eight, and the time had gone by
When his footsteps returning were wont to draw nigh,
For John was a steady and punctual man,
Ever true to his word, to his wife, and his clan,—
A fact which the good dame kept constant in mind
As she glanced at the clock, and gave heed to the wind;
For a winterly blast was beginning to blow
From the keen north-east—with a deep fall of snow
Which threaten'd ere morning to choke up the door,—
When woe to the wanderer over the moor!

Eight! nine o'clock struck! and no sign yet of John,
The children long since to their garret had gone;
And the dame, having finish'd her work long ago,
Now sat by the fire that was still all aglow;
A basin of frumenty stood on the hob,
Remains of the suppers of Harry and Bob,—
Intended for John as a special delight
When he came from his journey on that festal night:
And so she sat, wondering, pondering, thinking,
Now and then nodding, and blinking and winking,

For had she not been on her feet since the dawn,
 For full sixteen hours without ever a yawn ?
 And can it be matter of any surprise
 If a film of sleep crept over her eyes,
 And she glided off in a dosy dream,
 Where John, all white, in a snow-drift would seem ?
 When a crash at the door, like a sledge-hammer knock,
 Woke her up in a trice with a start and a shock ;
 And rushing with candle to open the door,
 She lifted the latch and fell back on the floor,
 While the doughty John, in a tipsy reel,
 Came headlong after her—head over heel !—
 The empty basket still tight on his arm,
 His hands very cold, but his face red and warm,
 While the snow on his coat like an avalanche fell
 On his prostrate dame, and the cat as well.

* * * * *

Oh, John ! Oh, John ! 'twas an evil luck
 That led thee that night to the " Fox and Duck,"—
 That bowl of Punch was a Devil's snare,
 That caused thee so long to shelter there :
 Better, far better, have braved the blast,
 Though the driving snow fell thick and fast,
 Than have lost thy good repute and fame,
 And exchanged them thus for a drunkard's name !

* * * * *

Dame Doughty, as soon as she opened her eyes,
 And recovered her legs from this sudden surprise—
 As soon as she saw how that treacherous man
 Had at length brought disgrace to his wife and his clan,
 Deep vengeance she vowed, although little she said,
 But hustled and hustled him quickly to bed,—
 Unheeding the maudlin excuses he made
 As he hiccup'd white lies about being *way-laid*
 And plunder'd alike the contents of his purse
 And basket as well (which to her was far worse);—
 Then left him alone on his back like a log,
 Where he soon began snoring as loud as a hog.

* * * * *

Next morning betimes she was up and astir,
 Doing duty for both without word or demur—
 Gave her children their breakfast, as well as the calves,
 The pigs and the fowls—doing nothing by halves—
 Then taking the frumenty left overnight
 She went to the room where that pitiful wight,
 Her husband and lord, was now sleeping calm
 As babe in a cradle, dreaming no harm;
 She left it to serve breakfast, dinner, and tea,
 And, locking the door, went away with the key.

* * * * *

The Christmas dinner was cooked and served,
 The turkey and chine all duly carved,—
 The pudding and pies were demolished the same

As though John himself had play'd part in the game
Uncle Ralph from the mill, with his wife and a son,
Were the guests that arrived as the clock struck one
And though, 'twas at first a surprise to be told
That their host was in bed of a very bad cold,
They got over it soon, and enjoyed none the less
The dinner provided with so much success.

* * * * *

Meantime on his bed through that weary day
John Doughty in shame and in penitence lay :
Now and then a faint effort he made to be heard,
But to all his appeals there came never a word ;
So he ate up the frumenty, grateful for that,
(Though he felt all the while he was robbing the cat) ;
For his heart was soft and his feelings strong,
And to man nor beast would he do any wrong,
But to all creation he wished good luck,
With but one exception—"The Fox and Duck."

Christmas, 1871.



A U T U M N T H O U G H T S .

(Suggested by the Song of the Redbreast and the Floods.)

The golden days of summer, the silver nights are o'er,
 The balmy summer zephyrs waft over us no more ;
 The scents of summer flowers and the hum of summer
 bees

No longer charm our senses, and soothe us as they please ;
 Yet cheerily and sweetly still
 The redbreast sings on high,
 With a flutter of his joyous wings,
 A grateful melody !

The blackbird and the thrush are silent in the grove,
 And the skylark, too, has ceased his lullaby of love,
 And all our migrant minstrels, that with the summer come,
 Have fled before the winter, to seek a brighter home ;
 Yet cheerily and merrily
 Our little constant friend,
 From the top of yonder tree,
 Sings gaily to the end.

It seems but yesterday since, we trod the meadows green,
 When first we heard the cuckoo and the swallow first was
 seen,
 And culled the fragrant hawthorn, with blossoms whiten'd
 o'er,

And cowslips by the handful, and blue-bells by the score ;
And watch'd the sparkling river flow on its tranquil
course,
As though it ne'er knew trouble, or trial of its force,
Toying amongst the pebbles, or rippling in the shade,
Or basking in still pools, like a coy and fickle maid.

And now the landscape's faded ; the meadows far and wide
A scene of desolation, with floods on every side,
And the placid river swollen, o'erflowing bank and brae,
Like a tyrant tearing onward, with devastating sway !
Yet cheerily and gratefully
The little Robin sings,
And with his sweet, melodious note
A welcome solace brings.

So may it be with us, in life's autumnal time,
When youth is fled for ever and manhood's vigorous
prime ;
When troubles come upon us and summer joys are past,
May we have still some redbreast to cheer us at the last,
And lovingly and soothingly
To chant a hopeful strain,
Bidding us trust in Providence
For sunshine yet again !

Nov. 4th, 1873.

THE BELL-BUOY AT SEA OFF FILEY BRIG.

Hark ! there is music afloat ;
 Church bells solemnly chiming !
 As we glide in the fisherman's boat,
 Or over the rocks go climbing ;
 On a lazy midsummer's day,
 When the noontide sun is glowing,
 And the sea in a mood of play,
 Is calmly ebbing and flowing
 All through the caves and pools
 On Filey's Brig abounding,
 Where she rests herself and cools,
 With scarce a surge resounding,
 Like a happy innocent child
 Taking its long vacation,
 Looking so meekly mild,
 As if courting approbation.

* * * * *

II.

Listen ! it comes again,—
 That sweet, melodious tinkle !
 And yet, it comes from the main,
 Where church bells seldom mingle.
 “Whence, and what can it be ?
 Oh, tell me, gentle stranger !”

“Sir, ’tis the bell-buoy at sea,
 Warning of rocks and danger ;
For this is a perilous coast,
 And often in stormy weather,
When land and lights are lost
 For days and nights together,—
The captain hears the bell
 And steers his ship to the offing ;
He knows the signal well
 And heeds it without scoffing ;
Thus many a noble crew,
 And many a mother’s darling
Is saved for perils new
 By the bell-buoy’s timely warning !”

* * * * *

III.

Then tinkle on, sweet chime !
 I listen with new pleasure,
As I catch from time to time
 Thy soft Æolian measure
Borne by the fitful gale
 From thy belfry on the ocean,
A low and plaintive wail,
 As of sorrow and emotion
At the false and fickle sea
 So lovely, yet so changeful,

So fair as it can be,
 Yet cruel and revengeful ;
And these silent, treacherous rocks,
 That aid her wicked passion,
As pitilessly she mocks
 And ridicules compassion.
But thou, O tuneful friend !
 Beneficent invention !
At least can serve the end
 Of warning and prevention,—
Like the blessed Gospel sound
 In darkest dispensation,
Guiding the homeward-bound
 To the haven of salvation !

Aug. 8th, 1874.



PALLIDA MORS.

SUGGESTED BY THE RECENT RAVAGES OF DEATH AT
HOME, AND WAR ABROAD.

*Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,
Regumque tures.* HORACE, Ode iv., Liber 1.

Young, middle-aged, and old !

Some in the busy whirl of life,

Some at the closing of the strife,—

The rich, the poor, the weak, the bold,

One, and another falls

As the grim monarch calls !

Of what avail the rank,

The gain of riches or of fame,

The pride of ancestry or name ?

Death sweeps his victims front and flank,

And strikes with equal blow

The lofty and the low !

Man struggles, toils, and schemes,—

He wears the brain, he frets the soul,

To win the prize, to reach the goal,

The pinnacle of all his dreams ;

And then he lays him down,

And dies with scarce renown !

Some in a green old age,

With hoary honours on their head,

Their duty done, their mission sped,

After a lengthen'd pilgrimage,

Like ripen'd fruit at last,

They fall with Autumn's blast.


Others in manhood's prime,—
In the full tide of their career,
When all they hope for seems so near,
At some unguarded, luckless time
Drift on a hidden rock
And perish with the shock.

And youth and beauty too—
In all the promise of their spring,
Their tender buds just opening,
And life before them bright to view,—
They wither, fade, and die,
Without our knowing why.

Like soldiers in the strife,
We see our comrades fall around
In quick succession to the ground,
And harden'd by the waste of life,
We scarcely pause to think
How soon we too may sink.

God grant, that when we fall,
It may not be on battle plain,
Amid the terrors of the slain,
Imploring piteous help in vain,—
But when *we* hear the midnight call,
May loving friends be near
Our peaceful end to cheer!

January 27th, 1871.



SONNET.

In Memoriam.

 WILLIAM HOWARD.


Obit Feb. 7th, 1869, Ætat 88.

Like autumn fruit that lingers to the last,
 Till fully ripe it softly melts away ;
 Whose perfect form no rude, untimely blast
 Has prematurely hastened to decay—
 So falls away our friend ; at eighty-eight,
 Still rosy as the morn, and fresh in mind,
 With active frame that seem'd to scorn the weight
 Of near a century ; with taste refin'd,
 Still sensitive to each harmonious sound,
 And keenly critical of music's laws,
 And love of all things lovely to be found
 In art or nature, poetry or prose ;
 So falls our friend ! and we shall see no more
 That venerable head, crown'd with its silver hoar.

UPPINGTON CHURCH.

THE CHRISTMAS DECORATING—AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

The grey old church of Uppington
Gleamed bright beneath the Christmas sun.
Whose slanting rays at mid-day fell
On window, roof, and pinnacle :
And through the ancient yews and elms
That guard the dead's sepulchral realms,
You caught anon its graceful spire
Pointing aloft to regions higher,
And warning all the unforgiven
To turn their thoughts from earth to heaven.
Hard by the church a mansion stood,
Surrounded by a belt of wood,
And glimpses here and there of park,
With clumps of hollies, almost dark,
And laurel groves that grew so high
They half-concealed the rookery,
That in the beeches overhead
Its ragg'd and scattered nests o'erspread.
Here lived the squire, and there beyond,
In that snug villa by the pond
Whose gabled-roof you just descry,
The parson lived, and hoped to die.
And now, on this eventful day
(Or Christmas *Eve*, we ought to say),



Both hall and parsonage had sent
 Of inmates, each its complement,
 To aid the curate and the clerk
 In doing decoration work,
 And making the old church within
 Fit for the morrow's gathering ;
 When all the country folk around
 Will hasten at the bell's glad sound
 To hear the psalms and anthems sung,
 So long prepared by old and young,
 And these grand decorations view,—
Some, p'rhaps, to hear the sermon too.

* * * * *

Ah ! what a merry group were they,
 And how they laughed and worked away ;
 Three pretty daughters from the hall,
 Besides two cousins, male and tall ;
 These, with the parson and his wife,
 And curate (foremost in the strife),
 Made up the party ; how they worked !
 Nothing neglected—nothing shirked,—
 Now, weaving garlands for the dead,
 (The marble tablets overhead),
 Or hanging rich festoons across
 The altar and the reredos ;
 And now with ivy leaves or laurel
 Pricking out texts of Christmas moral—
 “Peace upon earth, goodwill to men,”

And others of a similar strain.
Some to the pulpit gave their care,
And fringed it with a border rare—
Holly and berries intermixed,
With laurustinus flowers betwixt,
Some on the reading desk and font
Made rival efforts, as was wont ;
While in the vestry two were seen
Working a symbol for the screen ;
A grand, elaborate design,
That every other would outshine ;
And such a time it took to do it,
The rest were gone ere they were through it,
Leaving them in the church alone,
To follow when the work was done.
And so it chanced—the clerk discerning
The party from the church returning
Back to the parsonage and hall,
Supposed they represented all ;
And, looking in the porch once more,
Saw all were gone, and locked the door.

* * * * *

Ah, little thought that happy pair
How fled the time while toiling there,
As, hand to hand and head to head,
Among the leaves their fingers sped ;
Weaving and wreathing and entwining,
Like our first parents when designing

Those leafy robes and garments green,
The newest fashions ever seen.
But let us first know who they are—
The curate one—Augustus Clare,
Young, handsome, clever, and B.A.,
High Churchman too, as some would say ;
The other, Rosa MacIntyre,
The youngest daughter of the squire,
Who long has thought the young man's teaching
Far better than his master's preaching ;
And his intoning of the psalms
As near perfection as his charms
Of person, toilet, and address,
Leaving alone his cleverness.

So when they found themselves alone,“
The church door locked, their friends all gone,
They were not in the least afraid,
Nor yet annoyed, if truth be said,
But finished what they had to do,
And then surveyed it from a pew ;
To see the effect it would occasion
Upon the morrow's congregation.
—And will you be at all surprised
If, as they sat, and criticised,
The curate's hand, which all day long
Had been with hers the leaves among,
Slipped there again with eager grasp,
And ere she could remonstrance gasp

He whispered an impromptu prayer
To her (*his* only Virgin there),
In words so fervent and appealing,
So full of tenderness and feeling,
She thought, till then, she ne'er had heard
Such eloquence *in church* preferred ;
And ere they left the pew together
Had promised to be his for ever !

* * * *

One hour had passed, and Sol's last ray
Had vanished from that short-lived day.
The clerk, his wife, and children three,
Were eating plumcake with their tea ;
The Christmas party at the hall
Were just returning from a stroll
Which they had taken in the park
As "constitutional" ere dark ;
When suddenly they heard a sound
Which made them one and all turn round ;
The solemn tolling of the bell,
Which like an evil omen fell
At that strange hour ; what could it mean ?
The clerk, John Thompson, must be seen !
He, when he heard, jumped off his chair,
As though a pin had struck him there ;
He spilt his tea and nearly choked,
As the last mouthful he evoked.

He scratched his head, and looked to see
 If, in its place, the church-door key.
 Yes,—there it was ; “Then what the d——
 Living or dead, who could it be?”
 He snatched it down—then took his hat,
 And while his heart went pit-a-pat
 He hurried through the church-yard dim,
 Where stood the belfry, gaunt and grim ;
 Unlocked the door with trembling hand,
 And saw—no ghostly couple stand
 Before his dazed, bewildered eye,
 But flesh-and-blood reality ;
 Who soon explained the case, and cause,
 (As much at least as you’d suppose),
 And fee’d the old man for his fright
 With what, soon changed it to delight.

* * * * *

Long ere old Christmas came again,
 With all his decorating train,
 The Reverend Augustus Clare
 Had wed the squire’s daughter fair,
 And held a living of his own,—
 A church of ritual renown ;
 Which, when the festival returned,

They vowed each year, should be adorned
With the same ornamental taste,—
The same device and symbols chaste,
That once together they had wrought,
In sweet communion of thought,
When in the vestry, all alone,
Of the old church at Uppington.

Christmas, 1872.



THE RETURN OF SPRING.

FROM AN EPICUREAN POINT OF VIEW.

Once more the primrose scents the gale,
And wood anemones unveil
Their blushing beauty to the sun,
Proclaiming Spring's glad time begun ;
When, welcome blooms at dinner hour
That flow'r of all—the cauliflower !

I hear the plaintive cry of lambs
Bleating responses to their dams ;
I watch their gambols o'er the mead,
As playfully they test their speed,
And think with joy how soon they'll vie
To furnish me the best lamb fry !

The song of birds, the caw of rooks,
The tuneful babble of the brooks ;—
The cackle of parturient hens
From yonder farm, when day begins,
Bring pleasing hopes and prospects nigh
Of early chickens and rook-pie !

THE RETURN
FROM A WINTER'S TRIP

Once more the birds -
And wood-memories -
Their bustling beauty -
Proclaiming Spring's return -
When, welcome moon -
That flow'r of all—the caution—

I hear the plaintive cry of lambs
Bleating responses to the sun
I watch their gambols over grass
As playfully they scamper on
And think with me how soon
To furnish me the lamb
The song of some bird
The sound of some stream

1900
1901
1902

Green grows the grass beneath my feet,
And mosses, ferns, and meadow-sweet
Put forth their leaves of tender hue
From every bank and dell and view ;
But ah ! of all the grasses grown,
Give me the one as "sparrow" known !

Exulting runs the limpid stream,
With many a sparkle in its gleam,—
While here and there a rising trout
Tells that the April flies are out,—
And soon that dainty fish will be
Fit for the frying pan—and me !

Waft, gentle breeze ! shine, genial ray
E'en now I scent the holiday
When I o'er yonder hills may drive,
And my cloy'd appetite revive
On the Spring viands that await us—
Salad and lamb and new potatoes !



THE RUSTIC AND THE POET.

"Swarthy rustic, toiling daily
 At the plough or harrow's tail,
 'Heeing,' 'hawing' e'er so gaily,
 As thy horses fag or fail !
 Tell me, in thy avocation
 Hast thou either care or pain,
 Or a wish for variation,
 Or a longing vague and vain ?"

"Mester, Oi am none a schollard,
 And Oi scarce know what yo mean ;
 All my life the ploo Oi've foller'd,
 And Oi'st foller it agean.
 Is it rheumatiz ye spake on ?
 No, thank God ! Oi've none o' that,
 And my longing's chief for bacon,
 Variations, lean and fat."

"Lov'st thou, then, this lowly station,
 Art thou truly all content :
 No ambition, emulation,
 No regrets for life misspent—
 Dost thou feel no sense of *ennui*,—
 Ever on this self-same spot ;
 Canst thou toil thus without envy
 Of a lighter, happier lot ?"

“Dang it, sur, yo’re lingo caps me ;
What yo say Oi’m fash’d to know ;
Am Oi quite contented, ax ye,
Do Oi envy chaps like yo ?
No, Oi dunna ! Oi can keep well
As I am, and nowt regret ;
Oi can eit, and drink, and sleep well ;
What more can Oi hope to get ?”

“Swarthy rustic, eat thy bacon—
Eat and drink, and sleep in peace,
More philosopher than Bacon,
Plato, or Diogenes !
Greater far than Alexander
When the world lay at his feet ;
Thou art thy own wants commander,
Knowing when they are complete !”



THE MISSEL-THRUSH.

The Missel-Thrush sings on the topmost bough
 Of the tallest tree in the garden ground,
 And his bugle notes in their jubilant flow,
 Are welcom'd with joy by the neighbourhood round ;
 For his song is "Eureka, eureka ! lo, now
 The Queen of the Spring, she is found, she is found !"

Herald and trumpeter, foremost is he
 To sound the glad news, too, of Flora's return ;
 To wake up the minstrels of forest and lea
 And bid them rejoice, and no longer mourn,
 As he pipes forth, "Eureka ! to you and to me
 The winter is dying, the summer is born !"

In the joy of his heart and impetuous haste,
 He helpeth his consort to fashion her nest,
 Heedless how bleak and exposed it be placed—
 On a leafless fork of the elm's bare breast ;
 Still singing, "Eureka ! there's no time to waste ;
 Let us work while we may, and leave the rest !"

And should it be taken, as often it is
 By ruthless youths, who have climbed the tree,
 He maketh but little ado of this,
 But buildeth another as quick as may be,
 Still crying, "Eureka ! don't take it amiss,
 There's time enough yet for two or three !"

The wild winds of March interrupt not his song—
Hence is he known as the “storm-cock” of boys ;
Hail, snow, or rain do not daunt him, so long
As he hath for a list’ner, the mate of his choice ;
While he chanteth, “Eureka ! though Eurus be strong,
Soft Auster is nigh, so we still will rejoice !”

Friend of adversity ! brave bird and true !
Cheerful when all thy companions are mute ;
All save the redbreast—our winter friend, too—
Whose notes are to thine, like the harp to the flute :
Long, long may thy music our spirits renew,
And thy cry of “Eureka !” our glad ears salute.

March 31st, 1875.



NEW NURSERY RHYMES.

FOR THE "REFORM'D" CHILD'S PARLIAMENTARY
PICTURE BOOK.*

There was a little man, and he had a little plan
To reform a House of Commons that was bad, bad, bad ;
But the Commons said, "No, no, John, your little plan
won't do,"

Which made this little man very sad, sad, sad !

There was a valiant wight, and his name was Quaker
B——ght,

Who always wore a broad-brimm'd hat, hat, hat ;
And though call'd a man of peace, he was never at his ease
But when cudgelling an aristo-cratt-cratt-cratt !

There was a cunning Jew, who could do a trick or two,
Better far than any conjuror in town, town, town ;
And to see what he could do, made you almost "Dizzy"
too,

Which has made him now a man of great renown-nown-
nown !

There was a clever lad, who at school was ever *Glad*
To win a Latin prize, or a Greek, Greek, Greek ;
And when he came a man, and in Parliament did scan,
'Twas ravishing to hear him speak, speak, speak !

* A political squib, referring to a discussion on a new Reform Bill, introduced by Lord John Russell, in 1867, the parties referred to being Russell, Bright, Disraeli, Gladstone, Stanley, Lowe, and Lord Derby.

There was a noble Lord, now at the foreign board—
And he's his father's eldest, son, son, son—
Who promises so well, though a Tory and a swell,
That his countryman cry, "On, Stanley, on, on, on!"

There was a Captain bold, who, like David, we are told,
To a Cave drew all the rebels of his day, day, day;
And this Captain's soon became, a terror-sounding name,
To all who were in power, or in pay, pay, pay!

There was a gouty seer, both Premier and Peer,
A Scholar and a Senator too, too, too—
Who can write as well as talk, better far than he can walk,
And translate a book of Homer, or a blue, blue, blue!

And many more, beside, there are on every side,
Both Tory, Whig, Rad, and Adulla-mite,
Too numerous to name—too dubious in fame,—
So we'll leave them for the present out of sight, sight,
sight!"

March, 1867.



CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCES. *

"Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume
Labuntur anni."—HORACE.


'Heu fugaces! how they fly,
How the whirling years go by!
Christmas days succeed so fast,
We can scarce recall the past,
Or remember how we spent
Each one as it came and went;
Who the dear companions were
Sitting by us year by year,
As we gather'd round the board
Laden with its festive hoard,
And together quaff'd the wine
In the days of "auld lang syne."

Now as Christmas comes again,
And amid the hosts of slain,
We are spared another year,
To participate its cheer,—

* The Sheffield worthies alluded to in these Remembrances, who had passed away during this year, were John Holland, the well-known Poet; William Lockwood, Chairman of the Sheffield Gas Company, and of the Sheffield and Rotherham Bank, and noted fisherman; William Ibbotson Horn, an opulent bachelor, who left about £20,000 of legacies to the public charities; Sounes, Principal of the School of Art; Miss Harrison, the church philanthropist; the Rev. W. Mercer, Incumbent of St. George's, and compiler of Mercer's Hymn Book; Dr. Sale, Vicar of Sheffield and Canon of York; and Mrs. Alfred Gatty, editor of "Aunt Judy's Magazine."

While the sparkling jests abound,
And the bumping toasts go round,
Let us drink a silent one
To the spirits that have gone—
To the memory of the dead
That since Christmas last have fled,
And have left behind a name
And a transitory fame,
That still blossoms fresh and green,
While *we* linger on the scene ;
But, full soon, alas ! will fade
In the grave's oblivious shade,
When we, too, alike forgot,
Share with them the "common lot."

Gentle Holland—poet kind,
Friend of nature and mankind ;
Ardent wooer of the Muse,
Dear discourser of the news ;
True philosopher and sage,
Prizing only wisdom's page ;
Quaint, original, and pure—
In religion safe and sure—
Let us at this Christmas time
(Sung by him so oft in rhyme)
Throw fresh garlands o'er his tomb—
Fowers of everlasting bloom !



Lockwood ! of the granite mould,
Roughly polish'd, stern and bold ;
Strong of purpose, clear in brain ;
Kind of heart, and never vain ;
Ah ! what *banks* have mourn'd thy loss
(Those, I mean, of turf and moss),
Banks of Derwent and of Wye,
Where thy feet were wont to ply,
And thy cunning hand to throw
O'er the rippling stream below,
With sure aim and certain eye,
That inimitable fly,
Which no trout could e'er withstand,
Cast by thy all-practised hand !

Horn ! benevolent and great,
As in body, in estate ;
Heavy, honest and inert,
Full of charity at heart,
Yet deferring day by day,
Whatsoever would brook delay ;
How we miss his radiant face
In the old accustom'd place,
And the broad benignant smile
Innocent of guilt or guile !

Sounes ! ill-fated son of art,
Victim of the spoiler's dart,
Like thy predecessor slain


In the flush of life's campaign ;
In the pride of its success
And the prime of usefulness ;
Yet before thy work was done,
Or the prize of victory won,
Or the needful solace left
For thy mourners, thus bereft !

Harrison ! time-honour'd name,
Coupled with a maiden's fame,
Whose munificence had grown
In proportion with the town ;
Ever ready at command,
With the charitable hand,
And the sympathising heart
Help and comfort to impart ;
And when death at last came o'er,
And the hands could give no more,
Leaving most she had, behind
For the good of all mankind !

Mercer ! servant of the Lord,
Earnest preacher of His word,
Watchful shepherd ! zealous friend,
True and faithful to the end ;
—Master of the sacred lyre
And the songs its chords inspire,
Whose selected hymns and chants
Have supplied a nation's wants ;

He, too, gone ! and scarce the bell
O'er him tolls the parting knell,
When from yonder parish spire
Breaks another omen dire—
Longer, louder, than the last,
Deeper muffled—farther cast—
Echoing from hill to dale,—
Wafted by the mournful gale,
Tidings that in all who heard
Blank dismay and sorrow stirr'd.
—Ah, what honest tears were shed,
As that morning's news was spread !
“*Death of Sale !*” the black type said,—
Sheffield's spiritual head,
Vicar, canon, doctor, priest—
Prized, by those who knew him least,
Lov'd by all who knew him best,
—Let his memory be blest !

Last of all, amid the host
Of distinguish'd neighbours lost,
There is one of world-wide fame,
Whose familiar household name,
Every child has learnt to spell
And appreciate as well—
Dear “Aunt Judy”—children's friend,
Orphans' pleader to the end ;



Sweet instructress of the young
In their purest mother-tongue ;
Graceful writer of the day—
Story, parable, or lay ;
Or in earnest truthful prose
When describing Nature's laws—
She, too, pass'd from life to death,
And we lay the cypress wreath
Lovingly upon her grave
Where she sleeps—the good, the brave !

Pass the wine ! dry up the tear !
Christmas comes but once a year,
And we cannot linger long
O'er regrets and feelings strong ;
For the living claim our share
Of the joys we have to spare.
One toast more we drink again,
“Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men !”

Christmas, 1873.



TO WILLIAM HOWARD, ESQ.,
ON HIS 87TH BIRTHDAY.

And hast thou walked about,—how strange a story !
In Sheffield streets o'er eighty years ago ;
When George the Third was king, in all his glory,
And Pitt his friend, and Washington his foe ;—
When Sheffield Park with trees was dotted o'er,
And smiling gardens graced the Nursery ;
When blackberries grew ripe on Sheffield Moor,
And Glossop Road was bank'd with bilberry,—
When steam, and gas, and rails, were things unknown,
And even coaches yet were rude and rare ;
When flick'ring oil-lamps dimly lit the town,
And good folks rode on pillion, pack, or chair ?
And didst thou strut about in powder'd wig,
And ribbon'd cue, in pigtail fashion worn ?
Perchance a sword, too, dangling at thy leg,
While countless ruffles did thy breast adorn.
Tell us thy pastimes in those days of old ?
Did'st ever catch a salmon in the Don,
Or tickle trout at Blonk, or Castle Fold,
Where sluggish Sheaf its rugged course runs on ?

112 TO WILLIAM HOWARD, ESQ., ON HIS 87TH BIRTHDAY.

Did'st ever visit London in thy youth ?
If so, pray tell us something that is new
Of Pitt and Burke, and Fox,—the unvarnish'd truth—
A thing historians don't always do.

Did'st ever see old Drury in thy time,
When Siddons ruled, and Sheridan wrote plays ?
Tell us how Kemble acted in his prime—
How Liston laugh'd, and Munden chang'd his face.

Can'st tell us aught of Byron, Burns, or Scott,
When first their genius flashed upon the age—
What critics said, when Waverley came out,
And the "Childe Harold" wrote his pilgrimage ?

Remember'st aught of Wesley and his schism ?
Of Wilberforce, friend of the negro's claim ;
Or James Montgomery, escap'd from prison,
Illuming Hartshead with poetic fame ?

Or something of Ned Lud, and "Peterloo,"
Of Lord George Gordon and the Papist row ;
Or that election contest, when the two
Great Yorkshire Earls made gold like water flow ?

But thou art musical, and wouldst prefer
To tell us something of thy glorious art,
When the great world of music was astir
With the last works of Haydn and Mozart ?

TO WILLIAM HOWARD, ESQ., ON HIS 87TH BIRTHDAY. 113

How Braham sang, and Paganini played,
Though he was *modern* to the like of thee ;
And thy friend Foster reputation made
By many a strain of sacred melody.

Did'st thou not hear the thunder in the air
When Gaul's grand monarchy was overthrown ;
And shudder at the deeds of Robespierre,
When Bonaparte was yet a name unknown ?

Wouldst thou not throw thy cap up as a boy
At the great news of Nelson's victory ;
And swell the chorus of those shouts of joy
That cheered the first exploits of Wellesley ?

Perchance thou wert a captain, brave and bold,
In that fam'd corps of British Volunteers,
Which, when the beacon signal falsely told,
"The invader come !"—rush'd forth in arms and *tears* ?

But tell us something about Sheffield men
And Sheffield doings—who thy comrades were ?
What sort of feasts gave Master Cutlers then,
Who were the guests, and what the bill of fare ?

Dost thou remember Attercliffe's grim sight,
When Broughton's bones high on the gibbet swung ;
Or Runcorn, worried by his bear at night,
While all Park Hill with his loud death-cries rung ?

114 TO WILLIAM HOWARD, ESQ., ON HIS 87TH BIRTHDAY.

Oh, could'st thou write with that same gifted power
That charms discourse from thy Cremona's strings,
The world's mutation since thy natal hour,—
The shifting pantomime of men and things!—

How large a volume would thy writings fill!
How deep the interest, how wide the range!
No book of fiction ever could reveal
Such thrilling incident, such wondrous change!

Fill up the glass! We pledge thy health anew,
At Eighty-seven, still vigorous and hale,
Still fresh in feeling, as in colour true,
Like the last rose that scents the autumn gale.

Fill up the glass! May we another year
Still find thee with us, genial as now;
And long as mem'ry holds, our meetings here
Shall o'er life's track a cheerful radiance throw.

February 1st, 1868.



THE WELCOME OF
THE MEN OF HALLAMSHIRE
TO THE
PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.

To England's future King
And Denmark's daughter fair—
The brightest gem by far
That King will ever wear—
The sturdy Vulcan race,
The Cyclops of the day—
The men of terrible renown—
Of Sheffield's ill-reputed town,
Their loyal homage pay !

Not merely in the show,
The pageant and parade,
The miles of waving banners,
The trophy-crowned arcade ;
The grand triumphal arches,
The forest of festoons,—
The gorgeous ritual of State,
The crown's inevitable fate,
The thunder of the guns,—

These, but the outward signs—
 The symbol's glittering part
 To mark a deeper feeling,
 The welcome of the heart ;
 For these rough sons of toil
 Have finer grain within,
 And know the difference between
 A Red Republic, and a Queen
 Such as *our own* hath been !

Long as Victoria's crown
 Thus worthily be worn,
 And with untarnish'd brightness
 Hereafter shall adorn
 Her sons and their successors—
 The heirs of future thrones—
 No truer friends will they retain,
 Should anarchy disturb their reign,
 Than loyal Sheffield's sons !

Three hundred years have pass'd
 Since Royal footsteps trod
 Yon ancient castle court
 Where Shrewsbury's fortress stood ;
 And then, a captive Queen,
 Unfortunate as fair,
 Whose only welcome was the sound
 Of tramping sentinels around,
 Guarding with jealous care.

Chang'd is the time and scene !
 The cruel days of yore
 Have given place to freedom
 Wide as the ocean's shore,—
 And liberty and reason,
 Free as the mountain air,
 Combine with heart, and voice, and hand,
 And every token at command
 To greet *this* royal pair !

Not in a lonesome tower,
 Watch'd by a feudal lord,
Our royal guests to-day
 Sit at a merchant's board,
 And sleep secure unguarded
 Beneath a Mayor's roof—
 A noble citizen whose claim
 To honourable wealth and fame
 Is stain and slander-proof.*

And the proud Lord of Hallam,
 The Norfolk of to-day,—
 Heir of the ancient Manor
 Where Shrewsbury held sway,
 Now joins his loyal tenants,
 And opens wide his gate,
 To give a welcome fit and meet
 His future sovereign to greet
 With hospitable state !

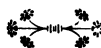
* Mark Firth, Esq., of Oakbrook, the donor of the "Firth Park," which the Prince and Princess had come to open.

118 THE WELCOME OF THE MEN OF HALLAMSHIRE.

Long live the Prince and Princess
Great Britain's throne to grace,
And add yet brighter lustre
To England's free-born race !
Long live the mother-Queen too,
Whose wise example still
Brings love and honour to the crown,
And keeps the rebel spirit down
Of Democratic will !

Long live the generous host !
Whose enterprising soul
Hath gain'd the town this honour
And given a Park withal !
And long may Sheffield Vulcans
Enjoy the noble boon ;
And future generations rise
To emulate the enterprise
Of Hallam's princely son !

Sheffield, August 16th, 1875.



THE WRECK OF THE ATLANTIC.

The steamer ship Atlantic
Sailed forth in all her pride ;
Her graceful spars, pointing up to the stars,
And canvas swelling wide.

For she was a thing of beauty—
And young, as she was fair ;
And rich, as fair, with equipments rare
About her everywhere.

Still in her teens of voyage,
Her fame just at its height,
She skimm'd like a queen, the ocean green,
In majesty and might.

A thousand strong she carried,
Who proudly trod her deck ;
And mark'd her grace, as she steam'd apace,
And answer'd her captain's beck.

Away, o'er the Irish Channel,
And away past the Emerald Isle,
She carved a track o'er the ocean's back
That made Old Neptune smile !

And all went well and prosper'd,
Despite the stormy billow ;

TO THE WILLOW WARBLER.

"SYLVIA TROCHILUS."

Thou tiny specimen of feather'd grace,
 Of simple note and unpretentious song ;
 The sweetest, smallest minstrel of thy race,
 Once more we welcome thee our woods among !
 Where hast thou been, thou migratory mite,
 Since last we heard thee, warbling in our grove,
 Cheering thy little ones, in their first flight
 With strains of sweet encouragement and love ?

Whence hast thou come, and whither didst thou flee,
 With thy young progeny at Summer's close,
 Ere the first apple ripen'd on the tree,
 Or the last leaf had faded on the rose ?
 Thou didst not surely cross the ocean wide,
 And brave the fury of the raging foam ?
 Thy feeble wings could ne'er *its* storms outride,
 That fragile atom ne'er such distance roam ?

Tell us, sweet bird, the secrets of thy life—
 Those hidden mysteries we long to know—
 What instinct guides thee in thy wanderings rife,
 From clime to clime ?—what the unerring law

That brings thee hither each recurring Spring,
To every copse our sylvan island through—
The very haunts from which ye first took wing,
There to rebuild, the nests from which ye flew ?

Where have ye sojourn'd ; in what southern clime
Found ye your Winter's home and resting place ?
Had ye your old companions for the time—
The blackcaps and the white throats of your race,
Making sweet melody in lonely woods
(Unheard, perchance, by man's approving ear)
On Afric's wilds, or Asia's solitudes,
Or shores less distant ? Tell us, sweet ones, where ?

Oft have I watch'd you in the early days
Of Spring's return, ere yet the full-leaf'd trees
Conceal'd your willow plumage from my gaze,—
With restless energy, like busy bees,
From bud to bud the insect treasures cull,
And only pause to pour a grateful lay
(Swelling your little throats unto the full),
As sweet as simple, and as plaintive, gay !

Now to your pleasant task once more repair,
And in yon bank, by yon accustom'd tree !
Your cozy nest and feather'd home prepare
In snug concealment, only known to me,—
Who will not tell your secret, or reveal
The hidden mystery of eggs within ;
But leave you unmolested to fulfil
The cherish'd hope—the promis'd blessing win !

TO THE EIGHTY-FOURTH REGIMENT

ON ITS RETURN FROM INDIA.

*Written on the occasion of the Presentation of an Address by the
Sheffield Town Council.*

Heroes of a hundred fights,
Siegues, marches, and campaigns ;
Brave defenders of our rights
On fierce India's burning plains !
Welcome home, ye veteran band,
After seventeen years of toil ;
Exiles in a foreign land,
Welcome to your native soil !

'Tis a nation's thanks ye claim,
All that countrymen can give,—
Honour, gratitude, and fame,
And a name that long shall live ;
For the deeds that ye have done,
Handed down on history's page,
Shall survive, when ye are gone
As your children's heritage !

But, what history shall tell
How your victories were won ;
How ye suffer'd, fought and fell,
'Neath that scorching Indian sun ?
Victims of a double foe—
Earth and sky in dread array,
From above, and from below,
Hurling firebrands every way ?

How, through every adverse fate,
Dauntlessly ye struggled on,—
To relieve, before too late,
Lucknow's fainting garrison ;
How, beleaguer'd in your turn,
In the city ye had storm'd,
Further sufferings were borne—
Further miracles perform'd ?

How, while comrades fell around,
(Havelock, Lawrence, borne away,) Spartan-like, ye held your ground
And the blood-hounds, kept at bay ;
Till the name of Campbell rose,
With a loud and welcome cry ;
Sounding terror to your foes,
And to you, fresh victory ?

How, with gallant Campbell then,
Reinforc'd, and re-inspir'd,
Ye revers'd the siege again,
And with double courage fir'd,

Drove the north assassin-nazi
From the ambush where they lay.
And thus took the great Nazi
Of his long-expect'd day.

How with vengeance he pursued
Far and wide across the land
Blood-reddening to find
Resting not till he had slain
For each murder a innocent
In the shambles of a window
Twelve times a miscreant
O that hellish host-kill more

Not thought better not to

JOHN HODGE'S CHRISTMAS :

AN EPISODE OF COTTAGE COUNTRY LIFE.

The wintry wind whistled o'er coppice and moor,
And moan'd down the chimney and howl'd at the door,
And the cold, driving sleet, that should have been snow,
Pelted hard at the window, with blow upon blow.

It was Christmas Eve, and John Hodge and his wife
Sat over a fire that had few signs of life,
While beside, on a bedstead there lay a mute form,
That seem'd about soon to die out with the storm.

It was but a child—a poor cottager's, too ;
Their first and their only—a daughter aged two ;—
A frail little thing—to the world a mere nought,
Yet priceless to them, and more precious than aught.

For long days and nights, with her short, catching breath,
She had wrestled with fever and struggled with death :
And now 'twas the crisis—the fever had gone,
And life in the balance hung tremblingly on.

They watch'd the pale face as she slept through the night,
Nor heeded the storm, though they longed for the light ;
They thought not of Christmas, yet look'd for the day
When the doctor his next promised visit would pay.

The morn came at last,—cold, cheerless and grey,
And a thick heavy mist o'er the dull landscape lay,
Yet the village bells rang from the church in the dale,
While ruddy boys chanted the old Christmas tale.

“Merry Christmas” indeed—“A Happy New Year,”
What a mock'ry the words to the lone couple there !
Still the child slumber'd on, as they wonder'd and fear'd
What the waking might be that so tardy appear'd.

At noon came the doctor—a kindly old man
Whose presence brought comfort, with hope in the van ;
He felt the small pulse, with his watch in his hand,
While the wan little face he most carefully scann'd.

As he watch'd, the child woke—with a wondering gaze
Which turn'd to a smile at the mother's embrace.
“Bring food,” cried the good man, “there's hope yet at
last,
If she eat she will live, and the danger be past.”

How they hoped, how they pray'd, how they wept at the
sight,
As the dear little child took its milk with delight !
And they saw by the sparkle of life in the eye
That the battle had turned, and that conquest was nigh.

“Merry Christmas to you, and God bless you, my boy !”
Was the next answer given by Hodge in his joy ;

For the world had all chang'd since the morning began—
A load was remov'd, and he felt a new man !

Oh, sweet was the dinner the wife now prepar'd,
The first that for many a day they had shar'd ;
And though frugal indeed, 'twas to them a repast
That made the day seem a Rejoicing at last !

And their daughter came round, and for long years to
come
Was the light of the cottage, the sunshine of home ;
And every Christmas John Hodge and his wife
Thank'd God for His mercy in sparing her life.

December 23rd, 1874.



ODE TO FRANCE.*

[BYRON MODIFIED.]

Oh, grief to thee, land of the Gaul !
 Oh, grief to thy children and thee !
 Unwise in thy glory, and crushed in thy fall,
 How wretched thy portion shall be !
 Compassion shall strike thee, forlorn,
 A mockery that never shall die,
 And sympathy, harder than hatred or scorn,
 Shall burthen the winds of thy sky ;
 And over thy downfall for ever be hurl'd
 The pity of nations—the jeers of the world !

 Thy beautiful city, so proud,
 The world's giddy haunt of delight,
 Where fashion, and pleasure, and opulence crowd,
 And all that is gorgeous and bright—
 It is humbled, and broken in heart,
 Its spirit of revelry fled ;
 In anguish, and anger, it writhes 'neath the smart,
 And wails o'er its valorous dead !
 Like Nineveh, Babylon, Carthage, and Rome,
 It yields to the Conqueror—vanquish'd at home.

* Written during the siege and occupation of Paris by the Prussian Army.



The vineyards that gladden'd thy soil,—
The hamlets that studded thy plain,—
Too vividly tell of the murderous toil
That cover'd their ruins with slain.
From château, and villa, and farm,
There comes a wild cry of despair,
As canon and mitrailleuse cease their alarm,
From wounded and sick lying there ;
And all that was prosperous, peaceful, and good,
Overthrown and o'erwhelm'd, in a torrent of blood !

The Ruler that govern'd thy land,
In the pride and the pomp of his power,
Who curb'd and restrain'd thee with vigorous hand,
Till Destiny ended his hour ;—
He is fallen, like others of old,
Which history's pages record,
The victim of pride, and ambition—behold
Napoleon yielding his sword !
Oh, grief to thee, grief to thee, land of the Gaul,
Unwise in thy glory, and crushed in thy fall !

Sept. 5th, 1870.



SUMMER THOUGHTS.


Now is the choicest morsel of the year,
The perfect fulness of the summer's reign ;
When wood, and field, and plant, and flower attain
The richest beauty that they ever wear :

The time of hawthorn and of chestnut flowers,
Of lady-smocks and sweet forget-me-nots ;
Of lovers, whispering in shady grots,
Making the most of day's long lingering hours :

The time of bees, and gaudy butterflies,
Of happy children in the bluebell glades ;
Of lowing cattle and bright milking-maids,
Filling the meadow with soft, soothing cries :

The time of birds and forest minstrelsy,
Sweeter by far than operatic strains
In crowded theatre, where fashion reigns,
And gas and tinsel hold supremacy.

The time of fishermen, by pool and stream,
Philosophising in their gentlest mood,
Yet striving hard to tempt the finny brood
With every lure the angler's art can scheme.



And soon the time the mower whets his scythe,
And busy haymakers begin their work,
Tossing the fragrant grass, with rake and fork,
And joking merrily, with voices blithe.

Yet, do our souls rise equal to the scene
That spreads around us like a heaven below ?
And do our hearts with holier rapture glow,
As we survey the landscape's glorious sheen ?

Are we more grateful and more purified,
More free from selfishness and worldly care ;
From sordid avarice, our greatest snare,
By all the beauties we have thus descried ?

Do we forget, amid these scenes of joy,
Sickness and Death still stalk throughout the land ;
And Want and Misery on every hand
Demand our strongest efforts to alloy ?

God grant, that, while we share this gladsome time
In all its fulness, both of sight and sound,
Our minds with nobler sentiments abound,
And in their purity, with Nature chime !

June, 1875.



THE STOMACH'S WARNING.

DEDICATED TO DINERS-OUT.

Forbear—forebear ! for pity's sake,
 Pass by that dish ! none other take ;
 Surely thy mouth hast ta'en enough in—
 Two mortal hours of ceaseless stuffing !
 Just think what thou hast stow'd away,
 Since knife and fork began to play ;
 First, soup—mock turtle—swallow'd hot,
 With punch, forsooth !—to cool thy throat ;
 Next turbot—lobster-sauce, and sherry,
 Then kidneys, stewed—with rice and curry ;
 Then dainty cutlet, with tomato,
 Mushroom, green peas, and new potato,
 Wash'd down by hock of Rudesheimer
 (Which well thou know'st from *Niersteiner*) ;
 One slice of turkey, boil'd, with ham—
 One sav'ry cut of early lamb—
 Then wild-duck, Charlotte-Russe, and trifle,
 And thrice champagne, my groans to stifle ;
 Concluding all, as if in sport,
 With macaroni, cheese and port !

* * * * *

“Concluding,” said I,—rash assertion !

'Twas but a pause in thy diversion !
A momentary lull to gain
Fresh vigour for a new campaign ;
Ice puddings now (ah me !) invite
Thy satiated appetite ;
Then melon, pear, and Yankee pippin,
And wine—which thou art ever sipping !
Thrice port, twice claret, hast thou had,
And once Madeira—which was bad),
And now thou puttest forth thine hand
To try what filberts I can stand !
Oh, foolish man ! oh suicidal !
Hast thou no power, thy joys to bridle ?
Dost thou suppose I'm made of metal,
To solve and grind, like mill or kettle ?
Hast thou not seen "Florentine Venus,"
And learnt the mysteries within us ?
How liver, stomach, heart, and lung,
Together work, for right or wrong ;
And when the one gets out of order
The whole machine is in disorder ?
Hast thou no fear of soften'd brain—
Of gouty leg, and *real* pain—
(Unlike the *sham* thou'st had so much of)—
Of harden'd liver, and a touch of
Congestion, cholera, or colic—
Blue devils, and their bilious frolic ?
Take warning, and beware in time ;

Such trials cannot long be mine :
Already do I feel the pain
Of over-work and over-strain.
A few more dinners such as these,
And then, farewell to all thy peace ;
Too late wilt thou repent thy folly,
And rue the days thou wert so jolly !



THE MISSING SHIP AT SEA.

A TRUE INCIDENT—ONE OF MANY.

A ship went out to sea,
As trim as a ship could be :
Her decks were bright,
And her sails were white,
And her flags wav'd merrily.

She had hardy hands on board,
Heaving at cable and cord :
While friends on shore,
They would ne'er see more,
Cheer'd them a parting word.

She sail'd from the port of Hull,
With a cargo rich and full ;
And she cross'd the bar
For some land afar,
Skimming the wave like a gull.

And anxious eyes were strain'd,
With many a tear enchain'd,
To catch the last
Of the gallant mast,
That now in the distance wan'd.

* * * *


A ship was hail'd at sea,
The self-same ship was she ;
She had pass'd the Cape
All well and safe,
All well as well could be !

And this was the only word,
Of tidings ever heard,
Of that noble barque,
Of high-class mark,
And her gallant crew on board !

And mothers' hearts have bled,
And lovers' eyes grown red ;
And sailors' wives
Have consum'd their lives,
In wonder and in dread—

In wonder, if the lost,
Were shipwreck'd on the coast,
Of some strange land—
A captive band
Amidst a savage host—

Of dread from day to day,
As long years roll'd away,
That the cruel wave
Of an ocean grave
Over their bodies lay.



God help those widows lone,
God hear that mother's moan,
As she thinks of her boy,
Her darling joy,
And hopes when hope is gone !

Nov. 1st, 1869.



THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER.

The revolving lights of the lighthouse tower
Were lit at the nightfall's usual hour,
Which the bright reflectors flash'd with power
 O'er the stormy deep below ;
For the wind had freshen'd to a gale,
And swept o'er the sea with a sullen wail,
Ill-boding every luckless sail
 That landward held its prow.

The keeper, his task for the present done,
To his snug little cot hard by had gone,
O'erlooking the ocean's dreary zone,
 Yet dry and warm within ;
And there, with his household gods around,
He ate and drank the good things he found,
As on Christmas-eve he was duly bound,
 Without reproach or sin.

Darker and darker, grew the night,
Till the storm had reach'd its wildest height,
Hiding the rays of the beacon light,
 And dimming it more and more,
When the boom of a gun from the surge below
And a struggling rocket's feeble glow,
And a cry, that coast-guards too well know
 Told of a wreck ashore.

-

Short was the feast in the lighthouse cot,
And the Christmas eve-tide soon forgot,
As the inmates hurried to the spot,
 Prompt to the rescue all.

Down the precipitous cliff they sped,
Down rope-ladders like links of thread,
Down to the beach's reefy bed,
 Where the seething billows roll.

There, where the breakers go and come,
And round the headland flash and foam,—
Where the wild sea-birds make their home,
 In many a rocky cave ;
Three shipwreck'd fishermen they found,
Shivering with cold, and almost drowned,—
Their shattered vessel fast aground,
 A prey to wind and wave.

Soon was the work of rescue done,
And ere the Christmas eve had gone,
Bright fires again in the cottage shone,—
 Again the feast began ;
Three husky seamen were the guests,
With grizzled beards, and bare, brown breasts,
Snatch'd from the billows' greedy crest,
 Grateful to God and man.

Christmas, 1875.

A MORNING LAY OF PATER FAMILIAS.

When the morning sun comes streaming,
Through my bedroom windows gleaming,
As, half musing, dozing, dreaming,

On my couch I lie ;
Sweet it is to be awaken,
By a white arm fondly shaken,
And a soft voice (ne'er mistaken),
Bidding slumbers fly.

Pleasant, too, the song of thrushes
In the garden trees and bushes,
As their music sweetly rushes

O'er my drowsy ear ;
But, oh ! sweeter far the babble
Of that noisy infant rabble,
As it pours its ceaseless gabble
From the nurs'ry near.

Pleasant, too, the sight of breakfast—
Comely wife, at tea-urn steadfast ;
Rosy children—every speck wash'd
Off their shining faces ;

Snowy linen—tidy waiter—
Bread and butter, thin as wafer,
New-laid eggs, and—morning paper ;
Coffee, hot as blazes !



What, though all the boys want breeching,
Booting, hatting, and school-teaching,
And the bigger ones are reaching
 Pocket-money age ;
What, though tailors' bills increasing,
Butchers', bakers', never ceasing,
And the servants ever teasing
 For advance of wage !

Have I not the consolation,
Of domestic regulation,
And conjugal approbation—
 Recompense for all ?
Have I not my Annie's kisses,
And that precious babe's caresses
(Sweetest of paternal blisses)
 Ever at my call !

Have I not, in daily pleasure,
Measure meted out for measure,
Treasure in exchange for treasure,
 Money's worth and more ?
Yes ; let Cœlebs hoard his guineas
For whome'er his next of kin is,—
Give me wife and piccaninnies—
 Never mind a score !



THE SIGNALMAN.

The signalman stands in his sentinel box
In a dark, deep cutting, hewn out of the rocks,
 With a yawning tunnel nigh ;
Where the darkness of night grows darker still,
And the fogs of winter, hang heavy and chill,
And the baffled winds, blow hoarse and shrill
 When the hurricane rages by.

His duty to guard the junction points,
Of the railway branch, with its maze of joints
 And labyrinth of lines ;
To ply the signal that guides the train,—
As it plunges on, from branch to main,
Or from main to branch, on its course again—
 Obedient to the signs.

Winter and summer, night and day,
In Stygian gloom or twilight grey,
 To his watch he keepeth true ;
For well he knows, as he strains his eyes,
One little mistake, one slight surprise,
One turn amiss of the lever he plies,
 And havoc and death ensue !

He lives in a cottage of bright red brick,
With a garden round—not far to seek,
When you've climb'd the cutting stairs :
Here dwell all his treasures and joys of earth,
His children and wife, in their sorrows or mirth—
The household gods of his peaceful hearth,
And solace of all his cares.

They bring him his meals at a certain hour,
When his turn is on, at the signal tower,
And he, the sole watchman there ;
And when the glad times of relief arrive,
He flies like a bee to his honey'd hive,
And thinks he's the happiest man alive,
With a home so near and dear.

Signalman ! signalman ! “ Watch and pray ”—
This be thy motto by night and by day,
For life and death are with thee !
Enjoy thy home, as becomes thee most,
But, Oh ! when on duty, at danger's post,
When care or neglect, means safe or lost
To hundreds of souls, and thousands of cost—
Watchful and prayerful be !

March 22nd, 1875.



THE STEAM-HAMMER.

DEDICATED TO THOSE LIVING IN ITS VICINITY.

Thud ! thud ! thud !
Cough ! cough ! cough !
Like a giant with an asthma,
And a voice both hoarse and rough ;
You hear the big Steam-hammer,
Pounding at his mill ;
Steady and slow, with measur'd blow,
And a steel and iron will.

Thud ! thud ! thud !
When eyes are heavy for sleep ;
And cough ! cough ! cough !
When the day begins to peep.
Is it the fabled Vulcan,
With his one-eyed Cyclops band,
Forging the thunderbolts of Jove
With never wearied hand ?

Would you view the giant—
Monster though he be—
Crushing ponderous ingots,
Terrible to see ?
Yet he can be gentle,
Tractable and mild,



And will crack a nut, or break an egg,
As softly as a child.

See his huge arm rising
At the prompter's call !
Yet a touch will turn it
And modulate the fall.
Such is all true greatness—
In the power of might,
Ready to do a little thing
If only it be right.

Thud ! thud ! thud !
See what it has wrought !
Fortune upon fortune,
Hammer'd out of nought ;
Almshouses and churches,—
Palaces and parks,
And everywhere prosperity
The product of its sparks !

Cough ! cough ! cough !
Through the midnight deep,
It is earning thousands
While the owners sleep ;
It is toiling for a nation
And all the world beside ;
For railways, ships, and arsenals,
O'er lands and oceans wide !

Let it thud and thunder—
Let it cough and groan—
Though our rest be broken
We will not bemoan,
But honour the steam giant—
The Vulcan of our time ;
No myth of old mythology,
But a working power sublime !

June 25th, 1874.




A STREET CHARACTER.

A little old man, with a sallow face
And a shrivell'd, parchment skin,
With a batter'd hat, and a seedy coat,
And an apron up to his chin,—
Stands all day long by the Railway Arch,
Selling his simple wares—
Butter-scotch, toffy, and India rock,
On a wooden tray he bears.

Winter and summer, there he stands,
Counting his half-penny gains,
With an ancient gig umbrella,
To shelter him when it rains ;
Around him you will often see,
Stray loungers of the street,
For he is a public character
Whom idlers love to meet.

And you will hear him there descant
On politics and laws—
Trades unions, and workmen's strikes—
Their remedy, and cause ;




For while he has been standing there
These fifteen years or more,
He has studied human nature well,
And gather'd wisdom's lore.

Go ask him how his business pays—
He answers with a smile,
“Although the dividends are small,
Thank God, *they're free of guile* ;
A *honest* shilling day by day
Is as much as it can do—
But on Saturdays, a trifle more
To serve for Sunday too.

“My wants are few ; I eat and drink
As much as does me good ;
There's more folks kill'd by *over much*
Than *over little* food.
I'm better off than many men
With wages ten times told—
I've neither servant, wife, nor child
To worry me or scold.

“I live in lodgings near at hand,
At half-a-crown a week,
Including fire on winter nights
And what small help I seek ;
But that, thank God, I seldom want,
Altho' I'm nigh fourscore,



For I have rarely ache or pain,
And of health a perfect store.

“It’s better earning something here,
Altho’ it be but small,
Than moping upon parish pay,
Or in the Workhouse thrall ;
And long as I have strength to stand,
I’ll struggle on alone,
And gain a living for myself,
Dependent upon none.”

God help thee, valiant little man !
I never see thy form,
Thy stoic face, and placid mien,
Serene amid the storm—
But I think of the great goodness
Of compensating Heaven
That to friendless age and poverty
So much content has given.

Though I do not say I envy thee
Thy humble lot and part,
Yet I envy much thy patient soul,
Thy brave enduring heart ;
And I learn from thee a lesson
Of manly toil and trust,
To make the best of circumstance
And own God’s dealings just.

May 15th, 1874.



CHRISTMAS DAY.

Once more the merry Christmas bells
Ring out their cheerful chime,
While every pealing echo tells
Another stroke of time ;—
Another circle of the wheel,
So rapid, that we scarcely feel
The flight when it is o'er.
Thus do the years go whirling on—
Another and another gone,
Till human destiny be done
And Time shall be no more !

Again the happy groups we meet,
In holiday array,
In every lane and every street
Where'er our footsteps stray ;
Some hast'ning to the House of Prayer,
To hear the day's glad anthem there,
And swell the strains above :—
On walks of health and pleasure, some,
Or visits to their childhood's home,
Where once a year they go and come—
A pilgrimage of love !



The holly and the mistletoe
Once more, as wont, are seen,
And bud and bloom where'er you go
In everlasting green ;
Fit emblems of the Christmas time,
Of Friendship, in her verdant prime,—
Of Love's unfading hue !
Of Life, amid surrounding death,
Of Hope, still blossoming beneath
The chilly winter's icy breath,
And promising anew !

Around each home's enliven'd hearth
Accustom'd faces meet,
And hearts unite in cheerful mirth,
And friendly voices greet ;
And Christmas rites are there renew'd,
The old, old customs that have stood
The lapse of ages past ;
And healths are drunk and carols sung,
And stories told by old and young,
And care from every brow is flung
While the fleet moments last !

And yet, how many a tender thought
Will steal among the train,
How many a recollection, fraught
With sadness and with pain !
What visions of the past disclose—

What gushing memories of those,
That now in church-yard lie !
Whose lov'd familiar faces long,
Commingled with our happy throng,
And shared the anecdote and song
Of Christmas days gone by !

"A merry Christmas!" so the words
Of welcome pass around,
And children's voices catch the chords,
And swell the joyful sound ;
But ah, how many still there are
On whom the words untimely jar,
With mockery of tone !
Whose joys have fled—whose clouded sky
Has not a ray to cheer the eye—
Whose laugh has ended in a sigh,
And mirth for ever gone !

But some there are, nor few indeed,
Who would be happy yet,
Could they but eat the honest bread
That industry might get ;
But cruel Fate has shut the door—
There is no work for starving poor,
The brand is on their brow ;
For them no Christmas cheer is spread—
No sparkling wine—there's scarcely bread
For the poor children that in bed
For warmth have crowded now !




Oh, ye who live in Plenty's Hall
And share in Dives' lot,
Whom Want nor Poverty befall,
And Famine knoweth not !
Remember Lazarus in rags,
Who hungry and a-weary drags
His feet unto your door ;
Forget not Destitution's claim—
The widow's lot—the orphan's name,
The poor—the sick—the blind—the lame,
And Heav'n will bless your store !



SEA-SIDE MEDITATIONS.

Here in this grot—in this cool, grateful shade
On Scarbro's cliff,—beneath the Esplanade,—
Where art and nature vie, in pleasing strife,
To yield mankind the sweetest joys of life ;
O'erlooking far the wide expanse below.
Of land and water—ocean's ebb and flow ;—
The placid bay, speck'd o'er with many a sail,
That flit like sea-birds, as they catch the gale ;
The yellow sands, with the blithe baby throng,
The weedy rocks, and glassy pools among,
Where Flora's treasures of the ocean bloom—
Each a museum and aquarium ;
The glittering spa—its terraces and towers,
Its winding walks, and paradise of flowers ;
Sooth'd by the melodies of yonder band
Playing below—harmoniously grand ;
Here let me linger through the summer days
In lazy attitude, devoid of grace,—
Here, while away the fervid, sultry hours
Till the hot sun has spent his raging powers ;
And calmly meditate on men and things,—
On human joys and human sufferings,
Of all the varied phases that we see



Around us here, of life's complexity.

.

I hold a book, but do not care to read,—
The Book of Nature is my only need ;
“The noblest study of mankind is man,”
I'll study him—and his fair partner scan.

.

There goes the crowd !—the fashionable crowd,—
The rich, the poor, the humble and the proud,
The gay, the sad, the feeble and the strong,
The tottering old, the buoyant, bounding young ;
The gouty sire, the convalescent child,
The ruddy boy, with jovial spirits wild,
The blooming bride, in beauty's brightest blush,
The tender maid, ting'd with the hectic flush
And skin transparent—unmistaken sign
Of lurking mischief—treacherous decline.
Here comes a portly squire, with pompous gait,
And here a parson, sable and sedate ;
There goes a city magnate, grave and grim,
Walking as though the world were made for him :
Here lovers come and flirt beneath the shade,
Talking sweet nonsense, as the vows are made ;
Some in the richest robes of fashion come,
And oft, alas ! in badge of mourning *some* ;
Each with their joys and griefs—their hopes and fears,
Unseen anxieties, and unshed tears.


.



Those ships at sea ! how lazily they glide—
They scarcely seem to move—but with the tide
To drift like we, to regions all unknown ;
Yet ere the night comes they will all be gone.
How fair they seem ! how peaceful and serene !
Yet, could we see the inner life within,
We scarce should wish that ocean life to share
With the wild crews that toil in danger there.
And now there comes a steamer ! see the trail
Of smoke behind her, like a comet's tail ;
Unlike the ships, she presses on her line
With steady aim and resolute design ;
Would we could imitate her purpose true,
And strive the course of duty to pursue—
Put on the steam, and trust not to the gale
Of fickle fortune, to inflate our sail.

* * * * *

Here, on my right, the ancient castle stands,
On its bold rock, uprising from the sands,
Its massive wall and rugged turret high
Stretching an outline clear against the sky ;
Could it but tell the history of its time !
Those feudal days when it was in its prime,
When its grim dungeons were in daily use ;
Ah ! what a theme of terror it would choose,
Of bygone cruelties, when might was right,
And Norman tyranny was at its height !
There to the left—that promontory's neck—



Runs "Filey Brigg," the scene of many a wreck ;
 Where many a home-bound mariner has found,
 The native rocks he'd cross'd the ocean round
 To see and reach once more, become the tomb
 Of his own grave, and hurry him to doom,
 After a thousand perils passed,
 And all he hoped for, was in sight at last.

* * * * *

Those crested waves ! that dash upon the beach,
 And madly fret themselves to overreach
 Their neighbours—and the limits of their span,—
 How they remind me of ambitious man,
 Who seeks to pass the orbit of his power,
 And tread on ground he cannot hold an hour—
 Like those wild waves, he ventures at the shock,
 Makes a bold leap, and breaks upon the rock !

* * * * *

"Blow, gentle gales," ye ocean breezes blow !
 Fan this hot cheek, and this perspiring brow ;
 Pierce the thick umbrage of this green arcade,
 And give me air to breathe, as well as shade ;
 And oft-times in the sultry summer days,
 When I return to crowded city ways,
 I'll think of Scarbro's labyrinthine bowers—
 Her glittering spa, and terraces, and towers,
 And the "cool grot" where I so oft reclined,
 And gave these meditations to the wind.

July 21st, 1869.


LITTLE HARRY.

ÆTAT III.

Harry, Harry, tiny treasure,
Never-tiring toy !
While thy pleasure knows no measure,
Be our daily joy ;
While the roses on thy cheek
Ne'er a blemish show,
And the lily hath no speck,
On thy marble brow.

While the longings of thy life,
Centre all in home,
And the cares of future strife
Are as yet to come :
Would that thou couldst ever be
Just as thou art now,
And no clouds of sorrow see—
No misfortunes know.

Harry, of the golden hair,
And the hazel eyes,
Lips so red, and limbs so fair—
White as ivory !




May thy duty, like thy beauty,
Steadfast be, and sure ;
May thy smile be e'er as guile-free,
And thy thoughts as pure.

Little doth he comprehend
All the love we bear him ;
How, each day, our prayers ascend,
That kind Heaven may spare him.
Little cares he what our prayers be,
Long as he can play ;
Romp and ramble, climb and scramble,
Through the live-long day.

Puzzles, skittles, Noah's ark,
Bricks (not made of clay),
Wooden horses, stiff and stark,
BROKEN every day ;
Picture books of " Poor Cock Robin,"
Cinderella's blisses,
Set his little heart a throbbing
More than all our kisses.

Music, too, hath charms for him—
Singing, his delight ;
" Happy Land," and " Rosseau's Dream,"
Lull him every night ;
And when twilight's shadows flee—
Light succeeding dark—




“ Not for Joseph,” chirrup he,
Wakeful as the lark !

Fitful, fickle, not a little
Wilful and mischievous,—
Shy and haughty, often naughty,
Careless how he grieves us ;
But, as sunshine follows shower,—
Calm, the stormy blast—
So his smiles have double power
When the cloud has pass’d.

And should sickness overtake him,
How we guard his rest !
Fearful lest a footfall wake him,
Or a wind molest ;
How alternate hope and fear
Buoys us, or depresses,—
Now a smile, and now a tear,
Mingling our caresses.

And when hope at length assures us,
We have won the fight,
And returning health allures us
Back to life’s delight ;
Ah ! those hours of convalescence,
With the new bought toys ;
How their soothing reminiscence
Hallows all our joys !



Little Harry, naughty Harry,
Mischief-loving sprite,
May the fun-gleams of thy sunbeams
Never grow less bright !
And when manhood creepeth o'er thee—
Golden childhood pass'd,—
May the love that we have for thee
Linger to the last !



* "SPRING, SPRING, GENTLE SPRING."


NEW WORDS TO A POPULAR SONG.

"Spring, spring, gentle spring!"

Ah, what stuff the poets write
 Yet, when pretty minstrels sing,
 How we listen with delight!
 Though we're shivering the while,
 Crouching near a blazing pile,
 As though Christmas were the season,
 And hard coal a price in reason;
 Elements, in constant strife,
 East winds, cutting like a knife,
 Storms of snow and hail and sleet,
 Whirling round you in a sheet;—
 "Spring, spring, gentle spring!"
 Do ye call this a gentle thing?

Coughs and colds, and pains rheumatic,
 Toothache, chronic, or emphatic,
 Gout, neuralgia, and tic,
 Bronchial tubes inflam'd and thick,
 Influenza—sore throat,
 Boils, carbuncles, and what not?

* The bitter Spring of 1873, when coal was at fabulous prices, and this song just came out.



Nerves unstrung, and liver wrong,
Say, is this a time for song ?

“ Spring, spring, gentle spring !”

Ah, ye wicked, mocking sprites,
How ye laugh while thus ye sing,
Of our English May's delights.

Cold within and cold without,
Domiciles turn'd inside out,—
Carpets up, and curtains down,
All things topsy-turvy thrown ;
Paperers here,—upholsterers there,—
Paint and whitewash everywhere—
Bedlam loose through all the household,
Scarce a room that would a mouse hold ;
Women in their element,—
Masters in bewilderment,
Seeking refuge at their club
From the everlasting “ scrub ;”
And all this because “ 'tis spring.”
“ Spring, spring, gentle spring !”
Ah, ye mocking sprites who sing,
Do ye call this a gentle thing ?

April 30th, 1873.

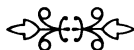


In Memoriam.

THOMAS SALE, D.D., CANON OF YORK.

"Friend after friend departs"—link after link
 Is sever'd from the chain that binds us here ;
 And each recurring wrench brings back the fear
 That those still left may snap, ere we can think.
 Toll, muffled bells ! ye mournful organs, peal
 Your saddest dirge—your deepest swelling strain !
 A Saul is dead—a king amongst us slain ;
 Vicar of Christ, in office, as in zeal !
 High-soul'd, large-hearted, with elastic mind
 That knew no narrow limits to its scope,
 But shar'd the sympathies of all mankind,
 While clear and steadfast in its own sure hope.
 Christian and scholar—gentleman and priest,
 Honour'd, and lov'd by all—his memory shall be blest

Sept. 21st, 1873.



PEACE AND WAR.*

The hills were purple with the vine,
The valleys red with harvest sign,
The wine-press waiting for the wine,
 The garner for the grain ;
The peasantry, with hook and knife,
Were ready for the peaceful strife,
Of gathering the food of life,
 Kind Heaven had sent again.

But while the God of Peace was there,
Smiling upon the scene so fair,
Bestowing blessings everywhere,
 On that fair land of sun,
The demon War broke o'er the land,
Attended by his hellish band,
With all their devilries in hand—
 Sword, bayonet, and gun !

How changed ! How hideous the sight !
A million souls in deadly fight,
Waging the war of might and right,
 Like savages of old !

* Written on the outbreak of War between France and Germany
in the summer of 1870.



Turning the vineyard and the wood
To reeking shambles, hot with blood,
That crimson dyed the crystal flood
Which through the valley roll'd.

And far and wide across the plain,
From Rhineland mountains to Champagne,
And thy fair province, loved Lorraine,
The ghastly slaughter spread ;
And all that industry had raised,
And all that virtue ever praised,
Was ravaged, pillaged, burnt, or razed,
And mingled with the dead !

Oh, men of Europe ! will ye be
For ever slaves, and never free,
Tools of despotic tyranny,
The puppets of a game ?
Renounce the call ! Deny the right,
That ye for Monarchs' whims must fight,
To prop the throne, or prove the might,
Of Dynasty and Name !

August 29th, 1870.



WRECK OF THE NORTHFLEET.*

The *Northfleet* at her anchors lay,
 With home's dear shore in sight,
 And her twenty score of human freight,
 Were cabin'd for the night ;
 The signal lamp was swung aloft,
 The nightwatch duly set,
 And all was snug, and taut, and safe,
 When squall and darkness met.

Four hundred anxious, hopeful souls
 She had within her hold,
 Mothers and wives, and little ones,
 And brides a few weeks told !
 And sturdy men of iron mould—
 Well skilled with pick and spade—
 Whose bones, and brains, and sinews strong,
 A precious cargo made.

For they were bound ten thousand miles,
 Across the Eastern seas,
 To carry England's iron roads
 To her antipodes ;


* An Australian emigrant ship, run down, as she lay at anchor in Dungeness Bay, in the year 1872, by the Spanish steamer *Murillo*.

And hope, and trust, and confidence
Were theirs that fatal night,
As in their berths they thought of home,
And future visions bright.

A shout—a crash—a loud hallo—
A shock like cannon's boom,
A wild, disordered rush on deck.
A struggle in the gloom ;
God help them all ! full soon the truth,
The hideous truth, was known—
A steamer's bow had struck the ship,
And she was going down.

Then rose the captain to his post—
Equal to danger's hour—
With death before him (and his bride),
Yet strong in valour's power ;
And the brave crew, with dauntless hearts,
Stood by him to the last,
Nor thought of safety to themselves,
Till every hope was past.

And then, alas ! the frantic fear
Of panic-stricken men,
Unused to perils of the sea
And ocean discipline ;




And women's wail, and children's cries,
Were borne upon the gale,
But ne'er an answering voice was heard,
Or reassuring hail !

The dastard steamer slunk away
When she had struck the blow
Like an assassin in the dark,
Deaf to its victim's woe ;
Then down the noble *Northfleet* went,
With all its human freight :
Down through the yawning gulf it sank,
And none to see the sight.

Hushed were the cries ; the cruel waves
Smothered them ere they rose ;—
And only now and then the shriek
Of some hard swimmer's throes—
As here and there a straggler clung
To ladder, spar, or plank,
And held awhile, in grim despair,
Till overpowered, he sank.

One boat alone escaped the wreck,
With cargo small and frail ;
Of the four hundred, scarce a fifth
Were spared to tell the tale.
The captain's wife, the youthful bride,
Was one among the few ;
But *he*, the lion-hearted " Knowles,"
Went down with ship and crew.



THE DEAD YEAR !

A SONNET.

With thunder, lightning, snow, and angry blast,
And driving sleet, and wild tempestuous rain,
The grim Old Year dies, blustering to the last,
Like a fierce giant in his anger slain.
Short though his time, and limited his reign,
What a wide world of mischief has he wrought !
What dire disasters following his train
At home, abroad, on men and nations brought !
Famine, and pestilence, and bloody war—
Tornado, earthquake, hurricane, and storm,
Panic and anarchy in every form,
Commercial ruin, and rebellion's jar !
Ah ! what a year of misery and woe
Lies buried 'neath this winding-sheet of snow !

Dec. 31st, 1866.




THE ANGLER'S SONG OF THE SPRING.

When the western breezes blow
Softly o'er the rippling stream ;
When the sun begins to glow
Every day with brighter beam ;
When the cock is heard to crow,
Early, as we lie in bed,
And the milkmaid's song below,
And the skylark's over head ;

When the cowslip scents the mead,
And the blue-bell yields delight,
And from every bank proceed
Odours sweet and colours bright ;
When the warblers of the grove,
(Wanderers and strangers some),
By their joyful music prove,
Winter fled, and summer come ;

When the corncrake calls at eve,
And the cuckoo "mocks" by day,
And beneath the cottage eave
To and fro the swallows stray ;
When the flies of May are out,
Hov'ring o'er the treach'rous stream,
And the eager-rising trout
Glance beneath the sun's broad beam ;



Then to our delightful sport,
By the margin of the flood,
With deceits of every sort
To allure the finny brood,—
Light of step and gay of heart,
Happy, joyous anglers, we
At the early dawn resort,
Blithely whistling o'er the lea.

Merrily, oh, merrily,
Our fond pastime we pursue ;
And our souls in harmony
With the glorious scenes we view,
We will happy, happy, be,
Oblivescient of the past,
And from every care be free,
While the blissful moments last !



THE PASSING BELL.

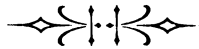
Walking on a summer's evening beside a suburban church-yard, the writer was startled by the sudden toll of the Passing Bell. Arriving at his friend's house, where was the clergyman with a number of parishioners, he asked for whom the bell was tolling at that late hour. No one being able to tell him, the following lines were suggested, as he returned musingly homewards :—

Hark ! 'tis the Passing Bell, tolling the news,
 Somebody dead ! somebody gone !
 Seeking a resting place under the yews,
 Here in the Church-yard, lowly and lone,
 With a sod and a stone,
 To shelter his head from the night-falling dews.

Solemnly, solemnly, breaks the dull sound,
 O'er the still night, at intervals slow ;
 Hushing the birds, that in concert around,
 Were joyously singing from every bough
 Their eventide flow,
 Till hushed by the death-knell to silence profound.

And who is the missing one gone to his rest ?
 Nobody knows, nobody cares !
 Some poor parishioner—fameless at best—
 One of the many whose worldly affairs,
 Trouble no heirs,
 And barely suffice to pay sexton and priest.

Has he no mourners—children or wife,
To weep o'er his grave, and sorrow for one
Whose strong arm sustained them in poverty's strife?
Or was he an old man, living alone,
Surrounded by none,—
Who long had outlived the companions of life?
What were his sufferings? How did he die?
Was he alone in the chamber of death?
Or had he compassionate friends standing by,
Whisp'ring kind words and upholding his faith,
While he drew his last breath,
And closèd for ever his death-clouded eye?
Let the bell toll! 'tis the first and the last,
From cradle to grave ever sounded for him!
And lay him in peace, where the trees overcast
Their quietest shadows, solemnly dim,—
To dream his last dream,
And only to wake at the Archangel's blast.



CHRISTMAS DAY IN HALL AND COT.

The guests are assembled in Blythesome Hall,
And tables are spread from wall to wall,
 In festival array ;
The mistletoe hangs in its wonted place,
And holly and laurel each window grace,
While gaiety shines in every face,
 All welcoming the day.

Lone the cot, and darkly drear,
 That bleak December morn ;
And scanty signs of Christmas cheer,
 Its gloomy hearth adorn.
No lively holly decks the wall,
 Nor mistletoe on high ;
No plenteous larder to recall
 The day's festivity.

The dinner is served at the rich man's board,
And the gladsome guests with one accord
 Sit down to the gay repast ;
And little think they of the world of care,
As they eat and drink of the sumptuous fare,
Viands so rich, and wines so rare,
 With plenty to the last.


Dinnerless and breakfastless
 The poor man's children lay,
In hunger, rags, and wretchedness,
 All through the Christmas-day.

Their father has been out of work
For fifteen weeks or more,
And mother, overdone with work,
Is lying at death's door.

The banquet is over in Blythesome Hall,
The lights are all lit, and the curtains fall
On the dark'ning world without ;
And now for the carol and Christmas song,
Riddles and games for both old and young,
Kept up without ceasing the whole night long,
Till Christmas again dies out.

Drearily and dismally
The evening shadows close,
Around that lonely family,
Forgotten in their woes.
The wretched fire is out at last,
And long has ceased to warm ;
While bitterly the cruel blast
Creeps round each shivering form.


Oh ye, whose happier lot is cast
Within the joyful hall—
Whose merry Christmas will be pass'd
In feast and festival—
Think of the hardships of the cot,
The starving, suffering poor ;
And soothe the sorrows of their lot,
From your abundant store !



CHATSWORTH.

Hail, Palace of the mountains !
Hail, land of wood and flowers !
Of rills and sunny fountains !
Of groves and fairy bowers !
Of hills, and vales, and rocky dells,
Enchanted by a thousand spells,
Of landscapes bright and gay,—
Whose varied scenery among,
The silver Derwent winds along,
Its mead-meandering way !

Ah ! with what charms attended,
Hath Nature's lovely Queen,
With Art here sweetly blended
To grace the glowing scene :
The stately Hall,—the rising wood,—
The placid lake,—the mountain flood,
The rich luxuriant mead ;
And Park, wherein the wandering deer
In herds gregarious appear
Beneath the sylvan shade !



Here Flora, too, hath chosen
Her fair and honour'd seat,
With lavish hand disclosing
Her beauties at thy feet ;
From east, from west, from lands afar,
Where flowers the radiant landscape star,
And gem the shining plain ;
Here, to this highly favour'd spot,
The first and fairest she hath brought,
Of all her glittering train !

Ah ! lovely scenes ! what grandeur
And beauty ye display :
Where'er my footsteps wander,
Fresh charms adorn the way !
Where'er I turn my feasting eyes,
New prospects there before me rise
With bright and varied gleam ;
So rich, so fairy-like,—the whole
Would seem to my enraptured soul
The phantom of a dream !

About 1847.



“MAN WANTS BUT LITTLE.”

A NEW VERSION.

“Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long,”—
Food, raiment, and a little gold
Just interspersed among.

A few odd thousands, all I ask
As yearly income *sure* ;
I scorn the greed of paltry pelf,
Yet care not to be poor !

A humble cot outside the town—
A dozen rooms will do,—
With a few roods of garden ground,
And stabling—say for two.

A modest dog-cart for myself,
A brougham for my wife ;
I only want *necessities*,
No luxuries of life !

A plate of soup, a slice of fish,
A cutlet or a steak,—
A pudding, and a crumb of cheese,
My frugal dinner make.

A glass of Hock or Burgundy,
I mind not *much* the sort,
To wash my dinner down, and then
Some two or three of port !

Indulgences I hold aloof,
And all that injures health ;
A meerschaum or a mild cigar
Is more to me than wealth !

Simple my tastes—a trip to town,
Just once a year—in May ;
A month in August at the sea,
My only holiday !

A rural life two days a week
Will give my heart content ;
With rod and gun, and liberty,
To rove where'er I'm bent.

I care not for the pomps of life—
They are but vanity !
A concert, play, and opera,
Are quite enough for me.

A dinner party now and then,
A casual supper-night,—
Will just suffice, to show my friends
I'm not a hermit quite.

Thus, let me live in mood serene,
From vain ambitions free ;
I envy not the proud and rich,
Nor poorer would I be !

HADDON HALL.


A SKETCH—DESCRIPTIVE OF A SCENE WHICH TOOK
PLACE JUNE 15TH, 1849.

'Twas noon ;—and Sol's meridian ray
Gleam'd on old Haddon's ruin grey ;
Each dusky tower, each gloomy height,
Was bathed in floods of golden light,
Whose radiant beams, of lightsome hue,
Around the pile their lustre threw ;
Flinging anon its sombre shade,
In darker contrast, o'er the glade,
Where, deeply shadowed in the grass,
It lay, an elongated mass,
Stretching its prostrate limbs afar,
Like a huge giant slain in war,
Till in the Wye's adjacent flood,
Broken at last, the image stood.

But not alone was Haddon's pile
Illumin'd by the sunbeam's smile,—
Not only turrets, walls, and towers,
But woods, and streams, and fields, and bowers
All shared the glorious god of day,
And gladden'd in his bounteous ray !

Above, dark groves of ancient trees
Wav'd their green branches in the breeze ;
Below, the Wye's meandering stream
Gush'd through the mead with silvery gleam ;
Around, as far as eye could view,
The landscape glow'd with brightest hue :
The rocky glen, the rising wood,
The smiling vale and crystal flood,
The towering hills of moorland heath,
And peaceful hamlets couch'd beneath,
All, gaily garbed in summer's dress,
Shone forth, mid Nature's loveliness,
And blended, in one beauteous view,
Colours of every shade and hue.
But Haddon saw another sight,
By the same sun's discursive light ;
For while the noontide splendour shone
O'er the horizon's glittering zone,
Stray wandering beams anon would pass,
The narrow casement's clouded glass,
Gliding through gallery and hall,—
Scaring the bats on roof and wall ;
But when at length they pierced the gloom,
That filled the ancient banquet room,
(Where, ages past, the proud and great
Of England's barons ruled the fête,
But where the tattered tap'stry now
A melancholy change doth show,)

Strange was the scene those beams beheld ;
Strange was the picture they reveal'd !
No longer desolate and void,
The room was filled from side to side—
The tables set, the banquet spread,
The ample sirloin at the head,
The dishes filled with fruit and kine,
The goblets crown'd with ruddy wine ;
While round the ancient room of state,
As fair a company there sate,
As Haddon in her proudest day,
E'er saw at wake or holiday ;
Nor ever till that hour, I ween,
Was such a group of beauty seen :
The maidens all, like rosebuds rare,
Were beautiful, and passing fair,—
The matrons too, with charms mature,
Failed not to dazzle and allure ;
While both, on that eventful day,
Held, as of old, triumphant sway ;
And as they sat around the board,
Methought the grim and bearded lord,
Whose picture hung upon the wall,
Smiled, as he looked down on them all ;
Wond'ring, no doubt, again to see
Such scenes of life and gaiety,
And hear the blythe and merry strain
Of human voices once again,



Filling the halls with festive roar,
As in the feudal days of yore ;
When he, perchance, the living lord,
Presided at the welcome board,
And saw around, on every hand,
The first and fairest of the land,
Join in the merriment and glee
Of English hospitality.

But, as he gazed, with kindling eye,
The vision changed as rapidly ;
Awhile, the merry sounds were heard,
Awhile, the busy footsteps stirr'd,
Awhile, the gay and happy throng
Filled the old hall with laugh and song ;
Then all was hushed : the clanging door
Creak'd on its rusty hinge no more ;
The music and the laugh were quelled,
And solitude sole empire held ;
The merry company had fled,
And all was silent as the dead !
Again the ancient room of state
Was left all void and desolate ;
The owlet and the bat again
Resumed their interrupted reign,
And the grim picture on the wall
Was left sole tenant of the Hall !

CHRISTMAS EVE—AT HOME AND ABROAD.

DURING THE CRIMEAN WAR.


'Tis snowing fast, 'tis freezing hard,
The ground is covered quite ;
And icicles hang in the yard—
The trees are robed in white.

The boys are sliding in the street,
And welcoming the snow ;
And careful walkers watch their feet,
To save their heads a blow.

The timid horses slowly creep,
And eye the treacherous road ;
And riders look before they leap,
And spare the accustom'd goad.

Strong artizans are trudging home,
Laden with Christmas fare ;
And thrifty wives with baskets roam
To markets cheap and rare.

Within the cottage, warm and bright,
The yule log blazes high,
And happy faces greet the sight
Of the round Christmas pie.



The grandsire in the corner sits,
Quaffing his evening ale ;
And Kitty sings and sighs by fits,
Till granny ends her tale.

The restless children romp all night,
And long for Christmas morn ;
For they have learnt a carol light
To sing on its return ;

And long ere darkness quits the skies,
By starlight's glimmering ray,
O'er the smooth snow and slippery ice
Their busy feet will stray,

Wishing to all who hear the sound,
A merry Christmas time,
And waking all the neighbours round
With their rude carol rhyme.

Within the rich man's spacious hall
The festive board is spread,
And o'er the wassail's reeking bowl
The social hours are sped.

And hospitality is rife
In every house and heart,
And everywhere performs the knife
A serviceable part.

Such is the Christmas eventide
In favour'd Albion's isle ;
Such are the customs that abide
Where peace and plenty smile.

But ah ! not such 'twill be to those,
Of England's gallant braves,
Amid Crimea's dreary snows,
Or stormy Euxine's waves.

No smiling home, no guarded hearth,
No peaceful pastime theirs ;
No sounds of joy or festive mirth,
From hearts that know not cares.

Instead of these, starvation, want—
The scowling fiends of war ;
Grim-visaged death, and sickness gaunt,
And bloody slaughter's jar !

A fearful Christmas will be theirs—
God grant that it were past !
And send an answer to our prayers
That this may be the last.

And when another Christmas comes,
With all its welcome train,
Safe in their happy English homes
May they be found again !

December, 1854.

THE BATTLE OF "BLEND'EM," *alias* THE
COALITION."

FOUGHT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 3, 1857

A new Version of Southey's "Battle of Blenheim."

'Twas early in the morning,
When Cobden's work was done,
For he had been hard fighting,
Ere rising of the sun ;
And at the breakfast-table he,
Was telling all about
His victory in parliament,
And ministerial rout.


"Ah ! 'twas a glorious sight," says he,
"Which none will e'er forget,
And 'twould have done you good to see
How on old Pam we set ;
And how, besieg'd, he stood at bay,
And dared us to come on,
Thinking that, single-handed, he
Could fight us, one by one."

THE BATTLE OF "BLEND'EM," *alias* THE "COALITION." 191

"Then at him one and all of us,
In front, and flank, and rear,
Peelites and Derb'ites, Whigs and Rads,
Commingling did appear ;
On every side we compass'd him,
And pinn'd him close and fast,
'Till forced by numbers to give in,
Hard fighting to the last."

"Well, 'twas a very shameful thing,"
Says little Peterkin,
A bright-eyed, curly-headed boy,
Who sat there listening.
"What had he done amiss, good sir,
That you should all unite,
To overcome this brave old man,
Do tell me—was it right?"

"Why, as to what he did amiss,
I cannot well relate,
Except that he was minister
And premier of the state ;
So that's why we did fight him,
And whether right or wrong,
It was a famous victory,
Which doth to me belong !"

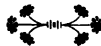


"But was not this Lord Palmerston,
Whom you have thus turned out,
The same, that in the Russian war
I heard so much about,
Who was the only statesman *true*
In England's hour of need,
And safely brought her back to peace
With honour and with speed?"

"Yes, 'tis the very self-same man ;
But that is past and done,
And now that all the fighting's o'er,
'Tis time that he was gone ;
For we are *men of peace*, you know,
And he's a *man of war* ;
He's had his day—so we want ours,
For we are strongest far."

"Well, after all, it seems to me
A very shabby thing,
And, what is worse, ungrateful too,"
Says Master Peterkin.

"Why, that's as people think, my boy ;
But this I know full well—
I've won a glorious victory,
As history will tell !"



BEN RHYDDING.

*Written after a short Visit to a Friend there, undergoing
the Water Cure under the care of the then
Principal, Dr. Macleod.*

Oh, stranger! hast thou ever seen that wonderful
establishment
Which crowns Ben Rhydding's rugged heights with
every Gothic blandishment,
Whose lofty towers and pinnacles, and gables multitu-
dinous,
And winding walks and terraces, high-climbing, altitu-
dinous,
Proclaim the mansion widely known, for treatment
hydropathical,
Where man and nature both combine, to make the
treatment practical?
Oh, if thou hast not, stranger, then, when next thou
fallest sick again,
Be sure and visit that sweet place, and leave it not too
quick again;
And thou wilt find a perfect cure for every ailment
physical,
If only thou wilt work in faith, and be not over
quizzical,
And do the bidding of the learned doctor who presideth
there,
And eat the food with grateful heart that he so well
provideth there,

And drink the water, fresh from spring, each morn a
brimming tumblerful,
And do the "douche," and "dripping sheet"—don't
mind the shock—'tis wonderful!—
The early drill, the noontide "pack," the evening
"spout" adown the back,
Oh, if you are not cured by that, your case is very
brown, alack!
But 'tis a very charming place; such is the verdict
pass'd on it;
Cold mutton's not *so very bad*, when breaking a long
fast on it.
The morning walk and mountain air will sharpen well
your appetite,
And what at home you'd think poor fare you there will
welcome with delight.
Then you have pleasing company, the choicest of
society—
Fair ladies to play croquet with, and games of all
variety;
And gentlemen of every grade—professors, artists,
millionaires;
And if excitement you require, you've but to join the
billiard players;
Oh, 'tis a very charming place,—such is the verdict
pass'd on it,
—Cold mutton is not *very bad*, when breaking a long
fast on it.

September, 1864.

OUR NEW ROOKERY.

AT OSGATHORPE, THE RESIDENCE OF W. WAKE, ESQ.

Not in the forest glade, or lonely wood
 Where giant oaks for centuries have stood ;
 Not in some belted copse that skirts a park,
 Where towering elms a neighbouring mansion mark ;

But, hard by a crowded city,
 Where the tumult knows no pity,
 And a thousand hammers braying,
 And a hundred engines playing,
 Shrieking, hissing, throbbing, groaning,
 Like a Pandemonium's moaning,
 Night and day, and day and night,
 Din our ears without respite—

Here, wandering Arabs of the tribe of rook,
 Have rear'd their nests amid the noise and smoke ;
 A young establishment of recent date—


Perchance the founders of a new estate :

And each morn we hear their clatter,
 As they caw, and scream, and chatter,
 Rousing us at early dawning,
 As we lie in bed a-yawning,
 Filling us with rural fancies,
 Wake or sleeping, as the chance is,
 Ruling, for a while, the clamour
 Of old Vulcan's ceaseless hammer.

Whence come they, these new colonists of ours ?
Are they "Adullamites" from other bowers,
Reformers, Radicals, and discontents,
Seceders from their tribe's ancestral tents ?

Or, come they from yonder Farm,
Exiles, driven in alarm,
By the Railway's rude invasion
Of their ancient habitation,
Undermining its foundation,
With a tunnel's desecration,
And the subterranean noises
In which Pluto p'rhaps rejoices,
But which rooks of ancient lineage
Shun with horror—and a scrimmage ?

Where'er they come from matters not to tell ;
Exiles or outcasts, we will greet them well,
Guard them from peril, and protect their young,
Now in full plume, and clamorous of tongue ;
Screaming, chattering, and cawing,
Fighting, quarrelling, and jawing,
Making every tree a Babel—
Fluttering their pinions sable,
As incessant they are trying
First experiments at flying,
From the tall trees' topmost branches
Wheeling forth in timid launches,
Safe from gun or rifle slaughter,



“*Wake*”-ful eyes in every quarter
Watching them through every danger
Of inhabitant or stranger,—
Trusting to their long abiding
As a colony to pride in ;
As an antidote to “Cyclops,”
“Atlas,” “Ætna,” and the like shops ;
As a rookery of fame
Lasting as their owner’s name.

May 21st, 1877.



THE MAN I ENVY.

How I envy the man who can always look round
 On himself and belongings with pleasure profound ;
 Who can saunter through life with a satisfied smile,
 And think how kind Fortune has blessed him the while—
 Who has health, good digestion, high spirit and hope,
 And ne'er looks beyond the small world of his scope.

No doubts or misgivings e'er trouble *his* mind ;
 Whatsoever he does must be right, you will find :
 While others may now and then make a mistake,
He always must win, whatsoever the stake ;
 At least so he says, and we're bound to believe :
 A man so high-favour'd would never deceive.

His wife is perfection ; his children the same,
 Precocities all, and predestined to fame.
 His house and his furniture, pictures and wine,
 His horses, his garden, his greenhouse and vine,
All rare and unrivall'd, in beauty and cost,
 Such as no other man for miles round him can boast.

Has he sometimes a fear, things will e'er go amiss,
 In this world or next—with himself or with *his* ?
 Not he ; how could such a man ever go wrong ?
 So good and so moral, so healthy and strong ;
 God made *him* for happiness—that is quite clear—
 So why of the future indulge in a fear ?

Oh, 'tis pleasant to see how he chuckles and laughs,
As he sits at his table, and gobbles and quaffs ;
Or walks down the road with a dignified swing,
Or stands up in church, to respond and to sing,
Confessing himself a most "mis'erable sinner,"
Yet all the while thinking of what is for dinner.

He's a capital shot ; never misses a bird ;
Never makes a bad debt ; and whenever you've heard
Of a Company's smash, be sure he's sold out ;
Or another's success, be sure he's just bought ;
In short, what he touches, like Midas of old,
Is sure (he assures us) to turn into gold.

Did I say that I envy him ? Well, so I do,
(Not his wife, or his house, or belongings thereto) ;
But I envy his placid contentment of mind,
And his trust in what Fortune for him has designed
His unerring belief that regarding *his* lot,
What *is* must be right, and *what isn't*, is *not*.

March 19th, 1877.



SONNET.

TO MY WIFE ON HER BIRTHDAY.

No birthday bauble, glittering with gold,
 Ruby or diamond, emerald or pearl,
 Such as in vulgar shops are daily sold
 To please the fickle fancy of a girl;
 A richer token unto thee I give,
 On this glad day that chronicles thy birth,
 A token which I know thou wilt receive
 With greater joy than gem of priceless worth;
 It is the treasure of a faithful heart,
 Of love exalted, purified, renewed,
 Chasten'd and sanctified—yet not subdued,
 And longing now its fulness to impart :
 This, then, my only offering shall be,
 Take it, dear wife, and lock it with thy key!

About 1860.



FAREWELL TO MY FIRST CONJUGAL HOME.

My dear, my lov'd, my happy, peaceful home!
 Home of my bridehood's honied, halcyon hours,
 Where the first roses of my love did bloom,
 And the first blossoms of my nuptial bowers!

Home of my little ones, where I first knew
 A husband's rapture and a parent's joy,
 First saw their infant-gambols as they grew,
 And heard the lisp of "Father" from my boy.

Dear hallow'd spot! and must I bid adieu
 To all the scenes that I have lov'd so well?
 And for another home, untried and new,
 To thy familiar threshold say, farewell!

Farewell the cosy hearth—the snug fireside,
 The modest prospect and the humble lawn,
 My garden, too, and summerhouse beside,
 Wherein so many happy hours have flown.

Yes! I must leave you—so the fates decree,
 Yet, wheresoe'er my wandering steps may roam,
 Long as my memory lives, I'll think of thee,
 My dear, my lov'd, my first conjugal home!

Lowfield, 1856.

SONNET.

In Memoriam.

M. M. F.

Obit October 27th, 1869. ÆTAT 17.

"Like as a leaf we fade;" some in the sere
 And yellow leaf, when Autumn's winds have blown,
 And Winter frosts have brought them rustling down,
 Their time appointed closing with the year;
 Others in Summer glory fade and fall,
 Untimely blighted in their fullest sheen;
 While some, alas! the loveliest of all,
 Are nipp'd in early Spring, in tender green.
 So faded *she*—the flow'ret we have seen,
 In all the gentle charms of maidenhood,
 With all her promises still in the bud,
 Hiding their blushing graces, half unseen.
 Too fair for earth, a flower of heaven has gone
 To bloom in brighter clime—God's will be done!



SQUIRE SHARPTON'S REPENTANCE.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

Squire Sharpton liv'd at a quaint old hall
That had stood for centuries,—gables and all,
Mullion'd windows and chimney towers,
With holly, and ivy, and laurel bowers,
Wooded park and expansive lake,
And all that a Squire's domain could make.

Yet in spite of all the good things he possess'd
Squire Sharpton's temper was none of the best,
He was gouty, choleric, testy, and sharp,
At little offences ready to carp,
And yet when pleas'd a right good fellow,
As ever at table grew jolly and mellow.

—On Christmas morning he got out of bed
With a twinge in his toe, and an ache in his head,
(For had he not taken the night before
Two tumblers of toddy, and “just one more”)
Which made his temper of course the worse
On a day when it should have been quite the reverse.

He scolded the singers for coming too soon,
And bidding him "wake" to their ill-sung tune ;
He snapp'd at the village boys chanting their ditty,
And made them decamp without pennies or pity ;
He snarl'd at the coachman, the keeper, and groom,
Then went off to church in a pet and a fume ;
And when he got there, did not "turn from his wrath"
As the wicked man should,—but nurs'd it to froth !
Finding fault with the parson for preaching too long,
And the choir-boys for singing too loud and too strong,
E'en the church decorations came in for a volley,
—Too much or too little, of laurel or holly,—
Then went home to lunch in a state of commotion,
Little better I fear for the morning's devotion.

After lunch he went out for a stroll in the park
To get a fresh appetite, ere it was dark ;
To walk off his spleen, ere he sat down to dinner,
On the day of all others to soften a sinner ;
But luckless for him, his far-seeing eye
Soon found a fresh grievance his temper to try,
For did he not see on his beautiful lake
That coil'd through the park like a silvery snake,
Youths of the parish, of humble condition,
Skating and sliding without his permission !—
Just as though they had quite a right to
Without any squire to be even polite to !
This was a thing to be stopp'd, and at once,

- Or where would the end be ? what the response ?
“Anarchy, lawlessness, and disorder,
A breaking down of the landmarks of order ;
English Fenians in open rebellion,
Claiming the rights of the radical million.
Where was the keeper, what was he doing ?
Fuddling no doubt o'er the Christmas-tide brewing ;
Off went the Squire, like shot from a gun,
Down on the boys and their innocent fun,
Bawling and shouting with flourish of stick
Bidding them off with a “ quick, march, quick,”
And as they delayed, he rush'd on the ice
To use stronger means, if not gone in a trice,
Forgetting however that seventeen stone
Was a heavier weight than those that were on,
And that the frail ice, being yet only young,
Was neither sufficiently thick nor strong,
To bear such a weight as the burly Squire,
As soon it was prov'd, by results most dire ;
For scarce had he strode more than ten yards on
• When crash went the ice, and the Squire was gone!
Down to the bottom, right overhead,
Down to the lake's cold slimy bed !
Lucky for him he was near to the land,
And luckier still there was help at hand ;
For the keeper whom he had so lately malign'd
Having with his small family frugally din'd,
Was taking his usual walk that way

And was just in time to discern the fray ;
Just in time to deliver his master
From what might have prov'd a most sad disaster,
And with the assistance of sundry boys,
The biggest *of those* whose unlawful joys
Had caused this mishap,—he was dragg'd to the shore,
More dead than alive, and chill'd to the core ;
Dumb was his tongue and deaf was his ear,
As they carried him on to a cottage near
Where they stripp'd him, warm'd him and put him to
 bed,
And sav'd him, no doubt, from a sleep with the dead.
That cot was the keeper's, which modestly stood
Down in the hollow adjoining the wood,
A snug little nest, built of rubble and thatch,
With kennels and orchard, and small garden patch ;
Here the Squire was attended by husband and wife,
And two active daughters, who vied in their strife
To do what they could till the doctor arrived,
And help from the hall further comforts contriv'd.
But for that day at least, he must stay at the cottage .
And his Christmas dinner be gruel and pottage.
At bed time they left him ; the danger was over,
A good night's repose, and he soon would recover,
But lying in bed gave him time for reflection
And of his past life a long retrospection ;
The quiet repose of that humble abode,
The cleanliness, comfort, and peace that it show'd,—

The happy contentment, and gentle demeanour
Of children and wife, made him feel all the keener
How harsh and unkind he had been all that day,
A day of all others when goodwill should sway,
How much he had miss'd that he might have enjoy'd,
Had his unbridled tongue been less roughly employ'd.
And he inwardly vow'd, when once more he got out
He would conquer his temper, in spite of the gout ;
He would treat all his servants as helpers and friends,
And for many unkindnesses make them amends,
He would let the boys slide without asking permission
And the carolers carol without intermission,
The parson should preach just as long as he pleased,
And the orchestra bellow without being teased ;
And to seal what he vow'd, he would make a grand
supper

To every servant, both lower and upper,
Both outside and in, that lived on the estate,
With parish authorities, little and great,—
Singers and band, whether choir-boys or men,
And parson and clerk to say grace and "amen,"
And every Christmas, while he was the Squire
This feast should be held, to record his desire
Of keeping up friendly relations with all,
And a long reign of Peace and Good-Will at the Hall.

TO AN OLD YEW TREE,
GROWING ON A LIMESTONE CRAG.

Thy leaves are bright and green, old yew,
Although thy trunk seems dead ;
Thy bloom, too, has a golden hue
Although in winter shed.

When other trees are bare and bald,
And show no signs of life,
Thy buds their richest tints unfold,
As with new vigour rife.

And yet thy gnarl'd old roots are bent,
And twisted in the rock,
As though their only nutriment
Was from that limestone block.

How many years or centuries
They've delv'd and flourished there,
Those crags alone, who saw thee rise,
That secret can declare.

That old man felling trees could tell
How, in his boyhood's time,
He nested in thy citadel
When thou wert in thy prime.

For then, as now, stray birds would find
A covert in thy shade,
To build their nests of varied kind,
For plundering boys to raid.

I never see thee but I think
Of green old age in man ;
Of some who never seem to shrink,
Or with disease grow wan.

Of some who flourish to the last,
In Winter as in Spring,—
On rock or soil,—wherever cast,
Wherever roots can cling.

Whose greenest buds of mind and soul
Appear in ripest age,
And cast a fragrance over all
Life's last and darkest stage.

Yet thou wilt live when they are gone,
And I, and all my race,—
A theme to moralize upon
For bards who take my place.



“ Oh yes, I long for Saturday,
I've then a night of rest,
And another day to follow it,—
The brightest and the best ;
I go to church in the morning,—
And in the afternoon
My children read till I fall asleep,
Which I do, oft too soon !

“ My girls both go to day school,
My boy lends hand with the boat,
My wife too baits the lines for me,
To be ready when afloat ;
So far I've much to thank God for,
Saved from a watery grave,
And I'll trust to Him in the future,
Who rules both wind and wave.”



DREAMLAND.

There is a land, a wondrous land,
Where nightly I delight to roam,
Unfetter'd by the ties of home,
Or Wisdom's guiding hand.

A land of free and boundless space,
Illimitable in its range
And inexhaustible in change
Of seasons, time, and place.

Here I can wander back, at will,
O'er all the shifting scenes of life,
Through chidhood, youth, and manhood's strife,
When age was distant still.

I meet dear friends that long have gone,
And in the grave forgotten lie,
Who talk and look, with voice and eye,
As though they still liv'd on.

Although no artist, I can paint
Pictures of wilder'ng designs,
And poems of a thousand lines
Write off without restraint.

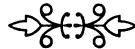
Unlearn'd in science, I invent
Marvels of engineering skill,
And make discoveries that fill
The world with wonderment.

Camilla-like, I scour the plain,
And lightly float upon the breeze,
Scarce touching earth, I skip the trees
And range the world's domain.

I roam through forests, gun in hand,
And fire away at endless game,
And If I do not kill the same,
It is the shot won't land.

In lovely streams and lochs I fish,
Where lusty trout incessant rise,
But fail to catch, because my flies
Prefer to hook my flesh.

Yes! dreamland is a wondrous realm,
And I would rather wander there,
And ride my Pegasus in air,
Than sleep the dreamless sleep that ne'er
To fancy gives the helm.



MRS. MUNDI.

(A SKETCH FROM LIFE.)

Mistress Mundi! Mistress Mundi!
 How I love your pleasant ways!
 So unlike to Mistress Grundy,
 Or immortal Madame Blaize.

You are never grim and grumpy,
 Speaking well of only few,—
You in dress are never frumpy,—
 Neither slumber in your pew.

Though a widow over sixty,
 Yet in feeling you are young,
 Younger far than some at fifty,
 And far livelier of tongue.

How you gossip—how you prattle,
 Always in a cheery vein,
 And retail the sinallest tattle,
 With no feeling of disdain.

Though you love your church most dearly
 And religion's heavenward walk,
 Yet you shun not too severely,
 Worldly ways and worldly talk.

How you sympathise with sorrow,
 And to-day give glad relief,
 Yet rejoice again to-morrow,
 With the gay that know no grief.

With what diligence diurnal,
You both read, and mark, and learn,
Every newspaper and journal,
And whatever books upturn.

Nought escapes your range of vision,
Nothing is too great or small,—
Lawsuits, politics, religion,
Deaths, advertisements, and all.

Though most virtuous of women,
Hating either Goth or Vandal,
Yet you're not without acumen,
When you come across a scandal.

How delightfully you chatter,
When on some congenial theme,—
Schools or missionary matter,—
Or the parson's last new scheme.

How indulgent to the young too,
Always giving something nice ;
Every one that you belong to,
Finds a welcome ear and voice.

How I wish, dear Mistress Mundi,
More would imitate your ways,
And we'd less of Mistress Grundy,
And lamented Madame Blaize !

PARSON GRAY.

A SKETCH OF MODERN CLERICAL LIFE IN RURAL
DISTRICTS.

“Here lies the body of Parson Gray!”—
Here underneath this yew tree’s shade,
By sorrowing friends he has just been laid,
To await the call of the judgment day:

Sorrowing children and sorrowing wife,—
Penniless left, as the poorest poor,—
In a few week’s time to be turned out of door,
And begin, with nothing, a new sad life.

For thirty years has he liv’d and lov’d,
In that vicarage home behind the church,
Buried in evergreens, hawthorn and birch,
From whose dear precincts he seldom mov’d.

Here in the flush of his manhood’s pride—
With Wrangler’s laurels still fresh on his brow,
He had brought his young wife, in her maiden’s glow,
To share the good work of a Parson’s bride.

O, happily sped those first few years!
Happy the work of his parish care,
Happy the toil in his garden fair,
When roseate hope still knew no fears.

Then children came to enhance their joy,
Year after year, a tender bud,
Blossoming out into maidenhood,—
Three lovely daughters, besides a boy.

And the seasons came, and the seasons went,
The Summer flowers and the Winter snows,
But never too chill a blast arose,
To mar that home's serene content.

And the children grew up, as the Parson grew old,
Though as yet they had cost him but little to train,
His income, well managed, sufficed in the main,
Three hundred pounds a year, all told !

But finishing schools had at last to be faced,—
Half-yearly bills for both daughters and son,
A drain on his purse that came suddenly on,
And forced him to realize how he was placed.

Then farming grew worse, and the price of corn fell,
And, just as his household expenses increased,
The glebe rents diminished and tithes almost ceas'd,
So the Parson grew poor, and the tenants as well.

Yet bravely he struggled for many a year,
Curtailing expenses wherever he could,
Comforts and luxuries daily withstood,
That all his life long he had held most dear.

But do what he could to make both ends meet,
He could not make five pounds serve for ten ;
So he drifted away like other men,
Into all the torturing troubles of debt.

Hopes he had none! no Uncles or Aunts
With prospects of legacies at their decease,
No chance of preferment—or likely increase
Of the much reduced income, to meet his sore wants.

All this to the Parson was bitterest grief,
For his life, until now, had been sunshine and flowers,
And these clouds of adversity sorrow'd his hours,
And broke the poor heart that could find no relief.

Then slowly he sicken'd and feebler he grew,
Although scarcely three, he looked like four score,
Yet he went through his parish work just as before,
Doing his duty as well as he knew.

At last came a stroke, and his paralyzed brain
Was nevermore conscious of woe or of weal,
And his soul passed away to the land of the leal,
While his wife and his children wept o'er him in vain.

So here he is laid !—poor Parson Gray !
Victim of troubles he could not forefend,
Like hundreds of others whose incomes depend
On glebe rents and tithe, in the Church of to-day.

THE RUSTIC INVALID.

In an old farm house,—by an old farm yard,
With an older ruin, as sentinel guard,
Where the pigeons and starlings build their nests
In the turreted chimneys' crumbling crests ;

With a garden before, and an orchard behind,
Where gnarl'd old apple trees, varied in kind,
And plums and pears, of a century's growth,
Still blossom and bear as they did in their youth

In a chamber here, a young invalid lay,
On a bed he had lain on night and day,
For days and weeks, and for months and years,
Without either murmurs or useless tears.

By an open window that look'd on the scene,—
The ruin, the homestead, the garden green,—
He lay when I saw him, in tranquil content,
Making the best of what heaven had sent.

He watch'd the gay pigeons careering above,
And heard with delight their soft cooings of love
He bask'd in the sunshine, and welcom'd the breeze
That fann'd his pale brow, as it sigh'd through the trees.

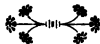
Around him hung cages of various birds,—
His friends and companions,—who chirp'd at his words,
And flutter'd with joy, as his hand touched the wire,
Or he whistl'd a note, their own song to inspire.

On his bed were strewn books, which kind friends had
supplied,
To cheer the lone days, when all else was denied,
All of which he read through with recurring delight,
Whether ancient, or modern, or heavy, or light.

Now and then too with music he varied his thrall,
With a fiddle and cornet, that hung on the wall ;
While a mignonette box by the window outside,
With beauty and fragrance, his senses provide.

And yet, there he lay, in the hey-day of youth,
A cripple for life, fully knowing the truth ;
In suffering often, and bodily pain,
And still ne'er a word did you hear him complain.

Oh would that all those, whom inscrutable Heaven
Such a deep bitter cup of affliction has given,
Could like him bear the chastisement, cheerful and
calm,
And mitigate sorrow, with Gilead's balm !



DOCTOR SQUILLS.

"Squills" was the name on the brass door plate,
 That hung on the green painted garden gate,
 "Surgeon" was also engraved below,
 The owner's profession and calling to show,
 Yet through all the district far and wide,
 Of that populous village and country side,
 He was known by the name of "Doctor Squills,"
 Sawyer of bones and compounder of pills ;
 For how knew the people what difference be
 'Twixt "F.R.C.S" and "M.B" or "M.D."—
 'Twixt Surgeon, Physician, and Apothecary
 All one and the same, though the names sometimes
 vary,
 For so long as he cured them all of their ills
 They would give him the title of "Doctor Squills."

But the doctor was getting the worse for wear,
 And I very much fear did not take that care
 Of his bodily health, which he ought to do,
 From the way he exhorted his patients to ;
 He would eat as much meat at his daily dinner,
 As would serve a week some peasant sinner,



ink as much wine at a single sitting
 ke poor Miss Prim a whole month of

ence was that he suffered from gout—
 times put his sweet temper out
 im (to put it in mildest of ways)—
 hat he was in the best of his days.

was a village some few miles away
 hitherto held undivided sway,
 ed it part of his rightful preserve
 nd *he* only good physic might serve,
 plaster bruises, cup, blister and bleed,
 he dear sex in their sorest need ;—
 disgust,—there came to this village
 a student,—just fresh from the tillage
 -al Schools,—with a brand new diploma
 ege of Surgeons,—and all the aroma
 tal practice,—who started forthwith
 se as “Doctor Cornelius Smith !”
 n and Surgeon” set forth on a plate
 e size of *our* Doctor’s and thrice as ornate,
 thereby that for rural convenience
 t practise as both, with magnanimous lenience,
 entirely the long domination
 labouring “Squills,” and his time-honoured
 on ;
 direct on his outlying covers,



And bagging *his* game as he would that of others.
—The doctor was wroth, and no wonder he should be,
And used as strong language as very well could be,
And the mention of “Smith” in his ears, was as bad full
As holding a piece of red rag to a mad bull.

* * * * *

It was soon after Christmas,—the very first weeks
Of the year eighteen hundred and eighty six,
There came such a storm, and downfall of snow
That travel by road was both dang'rous and slow,
For the drifts were so deep on the country roads
That horses and drivers stuck fast with their loads,
And before they could reach their proposed destination,
Were destined to wait for the snow's excavation.

Now Doctor Squills, on one terrible night,
Had to visit a patient, whom no other might,
Who liv'd miles away in th' identical village
His odious rival had ventured to pillage,
And rather than *she* should pass into Smith's hand
He would face the worst storm that e'er scourg'd the
land ;—

So he started off, through the blinding snow,
On his tough old mare, aged twenty or so,
And struggled and stumbled at every yard,
For her feet were not sharpened, and ball'd very hard,
Till at last he was thrown with a terrible pitch,
Neck and crop in a snowdrift concealing a ditch,

Where he lay for some time, less injured than frighten'd,
While his mare trotted home, of her load gladly
lighten'd.

* * * * *

—What now must be done ? he was two miles away,
From the house where his patient impatiently lay,
To walk all the way a full hour it would take him,
And yet, go he must, whatsoever o'ertake him,
For he knew very well, if he drove it too late,
They would send for the man with the big brazen
plate,

So he picked himself up, as well as he could,
And tried his old legs, to see if they would
Carry him on to his lone journey's end,
Which they finally did, with many a bend,
And many a totter and flounder and stumble,
Till at length at his goal he managed to tumble,
And knock at the door of his patient, long waiting,
Just in time to see " Smith " the sick chamber vacating,
" Too late, Doctor Squills," as he came down the
stairs,

Said that impudent prig, with confounded airs,
" I am sorry to say you are one hour too late,
But the long and the short is, that babies won't wait,
I have done what was wanted, and all has gone right,
And what now is needed is just a good night ;
I am glad I was in, as it happen'd to be,
And someday you'll perhaps do a like turn for me.

Meanwhile you're knocked up, and before you return,
 You must go to my house, and a pipe with me burn,
 With a glass of 'Glenlivet'—say 'Callidum cum,'
 Or if you prefer it, old pineapple rum,
 I've a spare bed to offer, so stay if you can,
 If not, I shall send you safe home with my man."

* * * * *

—Poor Squills was dumbfounded and scarcely could
 speak,

He was terribly tired, and fearfully weak,
 The walk had upset him, for was he not old,
 And gouty as well? and now to be told
 He must either accept hospitality's claim,
 From a stranger,—a rival too, whose very name
 Till now had been hateful,—or else struggle back
 The long way he had come,—that Siberian track!
 No that was impossible! so he must yield;—
 The Glenlivet was drunk, and a many pipes filled,
 He took the bed proffer'd and slept like a top,
 And walked home next morning, as straight as a prop;
 From that day to this, he and Smith were fast friends
 And help'd one another for mutual ends,
 And as things go on, in another year
 Squills and Smith" on each door-plate is bound to
 appear,

Till at last the *two* plates will be merged into *one*,
 And "Smith late Squills" will hang out alone.

THE DERBYSHIRE STONE-BREAKER.*

As you drive on the Hathersage road, half-way between
here and the heather,
Where field and plantation and moor, in patches lie
mingled together ;
Where you catch the first glimpse of the grouse, as he
warily feeds on the stubble,
Or perches with many a "cluck" on the fence-wall's
rude-built rubble,—
Here you will oftentimes see an old man ruddy and lusty,
Pounding away at a stone-heap, with hammer that
seldom grows rusty ;

Sometimes he sits to his work, but never a moment he
pauses,
While his hammer goes "clink, clink, clink," as mound
mound after mound it disposes ;
Wrinkled and weather'd his face is, telling of toil and
exposure,
Yet cheerful and bright withal, and ever in calm
composure ;

* Joseph Flint, for many years stone-breaker on the Dore roads
between Sheffield and Hathersage.

Trouble and care he has none, only a wife to bless him,
And though he has never a child, it does not at all
distress him,

With eighteen shillings a week, his moderate wants
supplying,
He is rich in his own esteem, and needs no self-denying ;

He takes his pint of beer, to wash down his frugal dinner,
And feels all the better for that, and neither a sot nor a
sinner,

He shuns the nightly alehouse, and has no taste for
boozing,

But a tea 'with his lonely wife, to him is the best carousing.

Oft in the glad spring-time, and in midsummer's golden
weather,


When the skylark sings overhead, and the bloom is upon
the heather,

I have seen him under a wall, his bacon and bread before
him,

With a mossy bank for carpet, and a curtain of sunlight
o'er him ;

And sometimes I have seen him, when a sudden storm
came pouring

Down from the hills above—down with a mighty roaring,
—Hail and rain and wind, and thunder-claps tremendous
That shook the mountains round, like doom's last crash
stupendous !



But what was this to him ? for forty years or longer,
He has brav'd the Peak's wild storms, and every year
 grown stronger ;
He wraps an old smock about him, patchy with many a
 mending,
And in some sheltering nook, quietly waits the ending.

Seventy years is his age, yet only looks about fifty,
Saxon in every line, sturdy and honest and thrifty ;
Little knows he of science, of "strata" and "crust" and
 "formations,"
Though all his life breaking rocks, and laying down new
 foundations.

Long may he pound away, and his hammer go "clink,
 clink, clinking,"
And when it grows rusty at last, and the old stone-breaker
 is sinking,
May his winter of age be calm, and its storms pass o'er
 him lightly,
Till he sleeps in the old church-yard in the rest of his
 Almighty.

October 29, 1877.



THE WIND AT THE WINDOW.


A winterly wind at the window moans
Through many a chink in the casement there,
And like an Æolian harp intones
A melody wild, and weird, and rare.

At times it whistles with flute-like note,
Then howls and shrieks with unearthly din,
Then sobs and wails, like a child who sought
A mother's forgiveness for its sin.

At times it will sigh, like a love-sick swain,
And breathe its wooings in whispers mild,
And then in a gust of passion again
Will bluster and rave like a madman wild.

And now, as my solitude affords
Time to indulge in fancy mood,
I try to interpret these fitful chords
And over their vagaries sit and brood.

I fancy thus, that a spirit-world
Is sending messages here and there,
On the wings of the wind, like a telephone, whirl'd
From regions of space we know not where.



I seem to hear, in the flute-like note,
A greeting from some I have lov'd and lost,
A tender reminder I'm not forgot
In the realm beyond, where they have cross'd.

And the lover-like whisper seems to say,
"Fear not to follow where we are gone,
But do your duty while you may,
And trust in the future to God alone."

Then comes the moan and the pitiful wail,
Sad as a shipwreck'd mariner's prayer,
And the message I hear borne along by the gale
Seems to be—"take warning, beware, prepare!"

"The season is yours that once was ours,
Abuse it not, but use it well,
Opportunities lost, and wasted hours
Are now the thoughts on which we dwell.

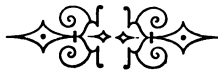
"This is our punishment :—Keen remorse
At what we have lost and might have won,
Indulgence, sloth, and pride our curse,
Intentions good, but the work undone."

In mood like this, and with fancies such,
I sit in the gloaming, all alone,
Of returning Christmas thinking much,
Of days that are fled, and friends that are gone.

Again and again, had I heard before
The wind at my window sigh and moan,
But never till now, had I thought of it more
Than a winterly blast of dismal tone.


'Twill be said perchance, I was hipp'd and moped—
In bad condition of nerve and blood ;—
Be that as it may, let it still be hoped
The wind and the warning may do me good.

Dec. 21st, 1877.



PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE SHEFFIELD "LITERARY AND
PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY," FEBRUARY 8TH, 1878.

While Art and Literature have held their sway
O'er men and nations, ages past away,
And Egypt, Greece, and Rome in turn can shew
Works unsurpass'd, two thousand years ago ;
Poetry, still the model of all time,
Philosophy, regarded still sublime,
Sculpture and Architecture that defy
The proudest modern works, with theirs to vie—
These latter days, shall Science surely claim
And hold in history immortal fame ;
Science, but little known and vaguely sought
When Homer sung, and Aristotle wrote,—
But dimly dawning upon Archimædes,
Socrates, Thales, Plato, and the Plinys,
And all the Classic sages that were known
When Rome and Athens were the world's renown,
For though historic times can take us back
Three thousand years or so, leaving a track
Of boundless undiscover'd space beyond,



Whose untold limits never will be found,
 And through the course of these three thousand
 years

In every age and country there appear
 At intervals—leviathans of thought—
 Men whose surpassing genius has brought
 Marvels of art, and learning of a kind
 That live for ever in the world of mind ;
 Yet still 'twas left for this last century,
 This last of all in human history,
 To utilise the wisdom of the past
 And draw from Science something great at last,
 Something to raise the happiness of man
 To heights unknown since first the world began.

* * * * *

What has it done ? E'en in the little space
 Of three score years, which many here can trace,
 Instead of sickly oil, and candle dim
 And feeble lamp that made the darkness grim,
 Now cheerful gas in every house and street
 Makes darkness light, and winter nights a treat—
 Instead of pillion, pack, or lumb'ring wain
 Toiling uneasily across the plain,
 Or yet the snug, top-heavy coach and four
 Reeling down hill at seven miles an hour—
 Now, like Camilla, o'er the vale we fly,
 And race the tempest, as it hurries by,
 Plunge through the mountain, leap the gorges o'er
 And in a day are whirl'd from shore to shore—

Rush over seas, and scorn both wind and wave,
 High though they run, and loudly though they rave.
 All this, the product of a jet of steam
 Turning a crank, a paddle, or a beam,
 Which all the schools of philosophic mind
 For thirty centuries had failed to find.

* * * * *

What has it done ? 'T has stretch'd from land to
 land,

And sea to sea, a wide, mysterious band
 That links the globe itself, and flashes thought
 Quick as the lightning—distance set at nought—
 And messages o'er space electrified,
 E'er yet the ink that wrote them is well dried.
 Not only this, but wondrous still to say,
 Not merely messages are on their way,
 By signs and symbols on an index wrought,
 But e'en the very voice itself is brought
 To tell the tale in its accustom'd tone,
 By the last marvel of the telephone.

* * * * *

What has it done ? Extracted out of dirt
 New shades of colour for a gown or shirt,
 From the base refuse of a gas-works' use
 Distilled the choicest scents and brightest hues,
 And from the rags pick'd up in house or street
 Furnish'd the printer with his daily sheet ;
 Which, through the modern steam-press quickly
 whirl'd,

Supplies the news and knowledge of the world !—
But not content with earth's exterior crust,
It digs deep down through its primeval dust,
Lays bare the rocks, and shows how they were made,
Stratum on stratum, in succession laid,
As sea or river silted up the sand,
Or left the mud to harden on the land—
Shows how the order of creation ran,
From the first mollusc to the final man.

* * * * *

Not only this,—insatiate Science still
(Like hungry boy that never has his fill)
Soars into space, and penetrates the skies,
And tells how stars and planets set and rise ;
Measures their distances, their breadth and height,
And gives us to a ton or two their weight ;
Unveils the wondrous curtain of the sun,
And probes the spots that o'er his surface run,
Tells us the daily fuel it consumes,
To furnish light for all that it illumines ;
Then roving through unfathomable space,
The distant track of comets it will trace.
—Then farther still, in depths more infinite,
New solar systems it will bring to light,
Vast as our own, with suns and stars in crowds
That formerly were viewed as neb'lous clouds,
But dimly seen by telescopic aid
Till modern optics tore aside the shade,

And showed each filmy nebula to be
Another firmament, and starry sea.

* * * * *

What has it done—this Science of our day ?
What has it *not* done ? rather shall we say,
In each direction as we turn our eyes,
We find it seeking some new enterprise :
It lends its aid to every trade and craft,
Now plies a needle, now an engine shaft,
Assists the humble sempstress in her toil,
And helps the husbandman to till the soil ;
Relieves the portrait painter of his task,
And takes a likeness ere you've time to ask
How the apparent miracle is done,
That draws a picture with a ray of sun.
It takes us soaring cloudward, over-head,
Or, diving downward to the ocean's bed,
Explores the sunken wreck, and robs again
The greedy sea of its ill-gotten gain ;
And soon perchance will deeper still explore,
And tunnel Dover's straits, from shore to shore.

* * * * *

It aids the surgeon, and his patient too,
And saves the suffering victim half his woe.
But not alone in peaceful industries.
Alas ! it should be so—too oft it vies
In fabricating instruments of war—
Engines that work destruction near and far,

Torpedoes, that can swim beneath the wave,
And sink an ironclad with all its brave
Defenders, ere they've time to guess or know
The stealthy movements of their hidden foe.
And Sheffield, too, in this has play'd a part,
By adding Science to each useful art,
Not only in its weapons of offence,
But also in its armour of defence,
And Firth and Cammell, Bessemer and Brown,
Shall share amongst them long and wide renown.
But Sheffield yet has won a higher fame
In nobler sciences, of loftier aim,
And given the world a Sorby to unfold
New fields of thought, new mines of mental gold,—
To analyse the mysteries of light,
And show how nature paints her colours bright,
And with his wondrous microscope disclose
A blood spot's essence, or a metal's flaws !

* * * * *

My task is ended ;—have I prov'd the case,
That Science now must hold the foremost place ?
Not that her sisters, Literature and Art,
Fulfil a humbler or less honour'd part,—
Or yet that she herself has half explor'd
Th' illimitable field where truth is stored.
But when in future ages—say perchance
A thousand years hence—history shall glance
At this, the nineteenth century,—and note

In a few pages all that then was wrought
For the world's progress—science shall maintain
The brightest spot in that eventful reign.
And Polynesian Poets may record
How Britain—*then* a half-forgotten word—
Was once the school of scientific lore,
And in that brilliant century did more
Its best achievements to advance and guide
Than all the nations of the earth beside ;
Than all past ages since the world began,
And written language first was known to man.



BRADFIELD BELLS.

Over moors and mountain fells,
Over winding dales and dells,
Sweetly chime those village bells
 From the old church tower.
Far and wide their music swells,
And the Sabbath message tells,
With a peal that seems to say:—
“Come, ye sinners, come and pray,
Cast your worldly cares away,
Come and worship while ye may,
 This the day and hour.”

In the church, within the door,
On the belfry's basement floor,
In the sight of rich and poor,
 There the ringers stand.
Lusty dalesmen, hale and strong,
Pulling hard and pulling long,
Keeping tune and keeping time,
Ringing out the well-known chime:—
“Come, ye sinners, come and pray,
Cast your worldly cares away,
Come and worship while ye may,
 Church-time is at hand.”

Tardily the sinners come,
Slow to leave the haunts of home,
Loath the moorland tracks to roam,

E'en for gospel news.

Yet of those that heed the call,
Young and old, both one and all,
Feel they did not come in vain,
When they answered the refrain :—
“Come, ye sinners, come and pray,
Cast your worldly cares away,
Come and worship while ye may,
How can ye refuse ?”

Chaste and simple service there,
Soothing music, chant and prayer,
Solemn light from windows rare,

Stain'd with matchless art.

Earnest sermon, not too long,
Faithful doctrine, not too strong,
What can sinners want beside,
When they hear, on Sabbath-tide,
Those sweet bells inviting say—
“Come, ye sinners, come and pray,
Cast your worldly cares away,
Come and worship while ye may,
Heav'n will take your part ?”

A MARCH LYRIC.

There is a wood I wot of
Through which a brooklet flows,
Where water-cress with duck-weed
In green abundance grows ;
Where ancient yews and hollies
With youthful birches blend,
And sturdy oaks and beeches
Their brawny arms extend.

Uprising from the brooklet
Are limestone crags and knolls,
With ivy partly mantled,
And rent with caves and holes ;
Here lurk the fox and rabbit
Deep in the rocky bed,
And here the fern and hart's-tongue
In wild profusion spread.

Here blooms the early primrose,
And here the first morels*
Are gather'd by the children
Down in the shady dells ;
The crow-foot and anemone
Here, too, are first to show,
And soon the fragrant blue-bell
In clusters thick will blow.

* A species of mushroom that grows in woods.

Here, too, is heard the storm-cock
Trilling his bugle-note,
And warning all the woodlands
That music is afloat ;—
That spring-tide is returning,
And all the minstrel choir
Should wake to her rejoicing,
And sing to Nature's lyre.

Although the wind is East yet,
And Auster lags behind,
Yet in this wood I wot of,
A sunny bank you'll find ;
That old man culling cresses,
Heeds neither wind nor sun,
But paddles up the brooklet
As though no water run.

Oh ! stranger do you ask me
To tell where lies my wood ?
Yes—some day, if you promise
To guard its solitude ;
There, when town cares oppress you
And worries intervene,
Go ; drink a draught from Nature,
And walk away your spleen !

Or, if a grief o'ertake you
You do not care to show,
And sad reflections haunt you
Of cherish'd friends laid low,
There you may go and hide it
And tell the rocks your woe,
And, like that murmuring streamlet,
Your tears uncheck'd may flow.

March, 1878.



SUMMER DYSPEPSIA.

Why, oh why, when summer birds are singing,
And summer bees are humming with delight,
And summer flowers, their sweetest incense flinging
From censers swung by Zephyrs through the night ?

Why, oh why, when Nature seems so joyous,
And all creation full of life and hope,
Should gloomy thoughts and dismal doubts annoy us,
And grin like spectres in our phantascope ?

Why should we fret our souls about to-morrow,
And dark contingencies, in distance looming ;
Or discount at long date, a bill of sorrow
That may as likely never be forthcoming ?

Why brood on mysteries we cannot fathom,
The unknown future, and the mystic past ?
The universe—of which we are an atom,
Small as a fly that but an hour, will last ?

Is it dyspepsia has clogg'd our liver,
And sent its morbid fancies to the brain ?
It could not be that pic-nic by the river—
That lobster-salad, and that iced champagne ?

It surely was not that impromptu supper
Of pickled salmon, spinach, and lamb-fry ?
We'd but a glass or two, of Marco Brunner,
And two or three of sherry—very dry.

Oh, happy swains, who whistle at the plough !
Oh, favour'd artizans, who toil and laugh !
Who nor despondence nor dyspepsia know,
And spend their last earn'd shilling o'er a quaff !

Sweet is to them the summer holiday—
The summer ride in 'bus or waggonette—
The summer dust that pothers on the way—
The summer heat inducing summer "wet."

Avaunt, black fiend ! and blue desponding doubt !
And thou, immortal Cockle, lend thine aid !
We, too, will try a change—a summer's out,
And fresher fields and pastures new invade !

June 27, 1878.



THE ENGINE DRIVER.

NIGHT EXPRESS.

Clang, goes the Railway bell—
Train just departing !
Up goes a hand as well,
Signal for starting !
Then with a whistle wild,
Shrill as a demon-child,
Shrieking in pain—
Down goes the crank of steel,
Round goes the engine wheel,
And with a thunder-peal,
Off goes the train !

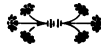
With brawny arm and steady hand
The Engine Driver takes his stand
Behind his iron-steed ;
To guide the monster in his course,
To curb the fury of his force,
And regulate his speed ;
And as he looks with eager sight,
Amid the blackness of the night,
To catch each passing signal-light
Varying from red to white,
And white to red again—
He feels at first a nervous fear,
A vague distrust of danger near,

Like a brave soldier oft is wont,
When first he gallops to the front
And sees the battle raging by,
And hears the roar of musketry,
The shout of death and victory,
 Resounding o'er the plain.

Then as he speeds along,
 Faster and faster,
Crossings and points among,
 Threat'ning disaster ;—
Out in the country wide,
On by the river side,
Over frail bridges,
Chasms and ridges,
Valleys and cuttings deep,
Villages fast asleep,
Through tunnels drearier still
E'en than the midnight chill.
Plunging and boring,
Shrieking and roaring,
Then by degrees he feels
Nerv'd like his engine wheels,
 Strong, and yet bright,
Strong in his courage high,
Bright in his watchful eye,
Steel'd for emergency,
 Cool as the night !

Safe, however, flies the train
Through the darkness and the rain,
Safe as carriage o'er a plain
 In the day's broad light.
Passenger, dismiss your fear,
Trust the grimy engineer,
 He will guide you right !
For *he* also values life,
And has home, and child, and wife,
In a city far away,
Which he hopes to reach ere day,
And amid the blinding storm
He is thinking of a form,
With a baby on her knee,
Pouring him a cup of tea,
In a cosy, tiny room,
Bright amid the morning's gloom,
 And whate'er befall,
Hand and eye, and nerve, and brain,
Will their utmost efforts strain
That re-union to gain
 For him, for you, and all !

Feb. 5th, 1879.



TO THE "CHIFF-CHAFF,"
ON HEARING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Dear little wanderer,
Landed again !
Welcome thy cheery note,
Harsh though, and plain ;
Scarcely a song is it,
Just a wild cry,
Telling of Spring return'd,
Winter gone by.

" Chiff-Chaff," " Chiff-Chaff," is all,
Ever we hear,
Seldom we see thee, though
Never so near ;
P'rhaps thou art " chaffing " us,
Making believe
South winds come with thee, and
East ones take leave.


First of thy race art thou
Over the seas,
Fresh from the sunny south
Borne by the breeze ;

Millions more following
Rank in thy rear,
Minstrels of whom thou art
First pioneer.

Tell us thy wanderings,
Whence hast thou come ?
Egypt or Syria,
Athens or Rome ?
Art thou the self-same bird
Chaffing just so,
Here in this very wood
Twelve months ago ?

Or art thou son of his,
Born on that bank,
Where the wild blue-bells grow,
Fragrant and rank ?
Seeking a home again
Where thou had'st birth,
After long journeyings
Over the earth ?

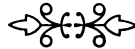
Soon will thy poor note be
Lost in the swell,
When thy companions come—
Sweet Philomel,
Black-cap and willow wren—
Petty-chaps, too—
Redstart and pipit, and
Mocking cuckoo.



Then when the Summer comes,
And thou art wed,
Ah, what a nest will be
Found in that bed !
Feather'd and dom'd, 'twill be
Hidden in moss ;
May it be spar'd, and know
Never a loss !

May its young progeny
Gladden thy heart,
And learn to "chaff" like thee,
Ere it depart !
May the same instinct, too,
Guide it aright,
When it returns with thee
On the long flight !

April 21st, 1879.



THE TOLL-BAR KEEPER:*

A MOORLAND SKETCH.

High on the Longshawe Moors,
 High upon Peak's grey mountains,
 Where the Burbage bubbles and brawls,
 In a hundred crystal fountains ;

 Where Froggatt and Millstone and Bamford
 Hang their precipitous ridges
 O'er the Sweet Vale of Hope,
 With its peaceful hamlets and bridges ;

 Where the wayward Derwent winds,
 Through meadows rich and mellow,
 Like a silver thread in the warp,
 With a woof of green and yellow ;

 Where Winhill, and Losehill, and Mam Tor,
 Rub their big shoulders together,
 Like giants that long have defied
 The ravage of time and weather.

 And many an ancient rock,
 And carl-wark, cave, and barrow
 Tell of a distant past,
 And a race that liv'd by the arrow.

* * * * *

* Samuel Barton, many years keeper of Stoney Ridge Bar, near Fox House, Derbyshire.

Here an old toll-bar stands,
On a ridge that is rugged and stony ;
Bare on the moorland heath,
The haunt of the grouse and coney.


And here, too, the old toll-keeper
Stands at his post of duty,
Taxing the traveller's purse,
Regardless of wealth or beauty.

A jovial, genial fellow,
A Falstaff in face and figure,
Although he knows nothing of "sack,"
Nor owes to "canary" his vigour.

He keeps a few pigs and a cow,
That feed on the wayside herbage ;
And cobbles the boots of his neighbours,
From Grindleford up to Burbage.

Afar from chapel or church,
He worships his God in the open,
And listens to sermons in stones,
Though never a word be spoken.

Ever a smile has he,
And ever a friendly greeting,
Whatever the weather may be,
Snowing, raining, or sleeting.



He cares not for thunder or lightning,
Hurricane or tornado,
And laughs at the roaring wind
As though it were all bravado.

An oracle as to the weather,
He watches each variation,
And prophecies storm or calm
By constant observation.

When dreary winter comes,
And the snow lies thick-around him,
He chuckles and mends the fire,
And thinks how well off 't has found him.

And when glad summer returns,
And the bloom is on the heather,
When the Cuckoo and Ring-ouzel
Perch on the wall together,

You'll see him in his garden,
Hoeing, digging, or weeding,
Or out upon the roadside
His various poultry feeding ;

And when the sun goes down
O'er the rocks of Higgin, westward,
He will smoke his pipe with the keepers
Returning home and restward.

* * * * *



Long may his genial face
Give us its friendly welcome,
When over his moor we drive,
Although it may be but seldom ;

And should the old Bar be removed,
And his "Pike" occupation ended,
May he cobble and thrive there still
By his careful wife attended ;

Calmly awaiting the time
When he too, on life's last mission,
Shall knock at the Gate of Heaven,
In hopes of a sure admission.

June 11th, 1879.



LESSONS ON CONTENTMENT.

“Scavenger, of evil odour,
Delving in that noisome drain,
Is not life to thee a burden
Full of drudgery and pain ?”
“Hardly quite as bad as that, sir,
Drudgery aw nivver fear ;
As to burden aw can bear it,
All aw want's a drop o' beer.”


“Beggar, tramp, whate'er they call thee,
Here's a sixpence ! tell me, now,
Hast thou not for death a longing,
And a better life to know ?”
“Yes, sir, aw should like a better,
More to eat and more to drink ;
As to dying aw'm scarce ready,
Nor have yet begun to think.”

“Hoary pilgrim ! parish pauper !
Ling'ring out the dregs of life,
Tell me, would'st thou not to-morrow
Gladly end this weary strife ?”
“No, sir, life is sweet to all men.
You the rich and us the poor ;
Give me but a bit more 'bacca,
And I want for nothing more.”

"Weary woman ! wan and woeful,
Poor man's wife, and drudge, and slave,
Hard thy lot is !—tell me, frankly,
Dost thou nothing better crave ?"
"Well, sir, I don't mind for work, sir,
'Tis what I was born to do ;
All I wish is, that my husband
Have it, with good wages, too."

"Costermonger ! with thy donkey
Hawking pots in slums and lanes,
Which of you shall I most pity—
Which the scantiest pittance gains ?"
"Mester, do not pity either,
We both lead a jolly life ;
Donkey never wants a mouthful—
I've enough—and ne'er a wife."

"Watchman ! guardian of the midnight,
Wakeful when the world's asleep,
Dost thou feel the deprivation,
Is thy disaffection deep ?"
"Sir, I've but to do my duty—
I've a wife and children five—
When they're happy I'm contented,
And thank God that they're alive."



“Street boy! nursling of the gutter,
Shivering in dirt and rags,
Art thou not both cold and hungry,
Standing barefoot on the flags?”
“Yes, sir, I’m both cold and hungry—
Can you spare me, sir, a penny?
Then I’d buy a mutton pie, sir,
And be happy boy as any.”
“Is it thus, then, with the poor,”
Mused I, as I walked along;
“Has their poverty alloy
Compensating fortune’s wrong?
Is their ignorance a blessing,
Making most of what they have,
Troubling not of what’s beyond them,
Or the terrors of the grave?”

October 30th, 1879.



THOUGHTS ON HEARING "CHRISTIANS AWAKE."

That Christmas strain ! the grand old tune,
 That charm'd my childhood and my youth,
 When all was tenderness and truth,
 And buoyant hope, Heav'n's greatest boon ;—
 Once more I hear the old refrain
 With sadden'd joy, and pleasing pain.

What cherish'd mem'ries of the past
 Its well remember'd words recall,—
 Words that have liv'd a century's roll,
 And still another may out-last ;
 And tell to children yet unborn,
 The gladsome news of Christmas morn.

Oft in the starlit, solemn night,
 In youthful days when sleep was sweet,
 I've roused from rosy dreams to greet,
 With pure and rapturous delight—
 The village minstrels when they came
 To chant that hymn of hallow'd fame.

And now, alas ! for human will !
 For life's romance, and youth's short reign,
 I never hear that midnight strain
 But wish it farther distant still !
 And sad to say, for music's charms
 I now prefer sweet slumber's arms !


THOUGHTS ON HEARING "CHRISTIANS AWAKE." 261

Rather would I, on Christmas Day,
In decorated church, *awake*,
With all the congregation, break
In one loud swell that glorious lay !
Or hear at my own fireside
Play'd by a goodly band outside.

Strange—that while men on every land
Where Christianity is known,
Commemorate this day as one
Of all the year supreme to stand,
So many should deny the sign
That marks its origin divine !

While every Church, and sect, and creed
For eighteen centuries and more,
Have chanted anthems o'er and o'er
In memory of this great deed,
And kept Messiah's birth the date
And advent of a new estate !

Is this a myth ? has half mankind
For all these ages been deceived ;
Was Christ, the Son of God, believed
No other than of human kind ?
A holy martyr or a Prophet,
Like Bramha, Budha, or Mahomet ?



262 THOUGHTS ON HEARING "CHRISTIANS AWAKE."

"Christians awake," salute the morn !
We *still* believe the record true—
That Christ, divine and human too,
On that eventful day was born ;
And long as we have breath to spare
We'll chant this hymn of praise and prayer !

Christmas, 1879.



THE BRIDGE OF TAY.

“Night, and storm, and darkness,”
Wind, and cloud, and rain !
And a rapid, roaring river,
Rushing to the main ;
Intervals of moonlight,
Breaking through the storm,
Showing a shadowy bridge there
Of unsubstantial form.

Would it had been a shadow !
A phantom, or a dream !
And alas ! that it was too real,
Pillar, and girder, and beam !
And it spann'd the foaming torrent
Like a fragile, beautiful toy,
And the railway world look'd on it
As an engineering joy.

The trains skimm'd lightly o'er it,—
Two miles from shore to shore,
Laden with human cargoes,
As they oft had done before,—
And passengers little heeded,
But laughed, and talked, and read,
For they were used to travel,
And felt safe as if in bed.

“ Night, and storm, and darkness,”
And hurricane as well,
That Sabbath night ruled rampant
With a legion demons' spell,
And the train, just once too often,
Pursued its fatal course,
And thought it could win the battle,
Opposing force to force.

The shore spectators view'd it,
As it crept along the bridge,
And the glimmer of its lamp-lights
Shone o'er the giddy ridge,—
And then a blaze of fireworks,—
A moment, and no more ;—
And nought again was seen or heard
But the stormy tempest's roar.

Then anxious friends awaiting
The train that never came,
Grew sick with fears appalling
They scarcely dared to name ;
But soon suspense was over,
The hideous truth made known,
That bridge, and train, and passengers
Together had gone down !

Down in the darkling river,
Down in the seething flood,
Iron and wood confusedly
With human flesh and blood !
And not a soul surviving
To tell the ghastly tale,
Or helping hand to save them,
Could help at all avail !

The storm had won the conflict,—
The bridge refused the strain,
And breaking in the middle
Hurl'd down the hapless train ;
And seventy souls thus suffer'd
A fate surpassing far
The horrors of a shipwreck,
Or even bloody war !

an. 30th, 1880.



GROUSE-LAND—IN THE PEAK.

Will you go with me to the moors?
To the land of grouse and heather,—
Yon level ridge in the distance,
Where hill and sky meet together?
One hour from where we are standing,
In sound of the forge and the hammer
And you'll hear the crow of the moor-cock,
And the lapwing's ceaseless clamour.

Will you go in the early spring-time,
When the gorse is yellow with bloom,
And the mosses and the rushes
Their greenest tints assume;
When the moorland rills and brooklets,
Flush'd by the vernal rains,
Sparkle and brawl in the sunshine,
As they hurry down to the plains?

Or will you go in the summer,
When the purple is on the heath,
And the bilberries are ripening
The clustering wires beneath;
When the cuckoo sings in the larches,
And the restless ouzel flits,
Showing the ring on his bosom
As on some boulder he sits.

Or would you prefer the autumn,
When the bloom of the heath is strown,
And the bilberry leaves and bracken
Are ting'd with russet and brown ;
When the grouse are wild and wary,
And the sportsman's skill is tried,
To bring down his driven quarry
At ranges long and wide.

Spring-time, summer, or autumn,
I'll show you a glorious sight,—
Woodland, moorland, and mountain,
Towering height upon height ;
Rolling prairies of heather,
And stream-meander'd vales,
With park and forest blended,
And panoramic dales.

I will show you caves and barrows
Of a world before the flood,
When the bison and hyena
Rang'd over moor and wood ;
Where races of men lie buried
Who fought with weapons of stone,
And sew'd their deer-skins together
With implements of bone.

I will show you ancient ruins
Of castle, camp, and hall,
Where feudal chiefs and barons
Once held high festival ;
And a modern ducal mansion,
That challenges the past,
To fill the page of history
While history shall last.

I'll tempt you with choicest fishing
In trout-abounding streams,
And if you fail in the catching,
You may catch them in your dreams ;
And nights and weeks succeeding
You will dream of grouse and heather,
And peaks, and tors, and mountains,
With caverns mix'd together.

May 13th, 1880.



THE LITTLE INN BY THE BRIDGE.*

A DERBYSHIRE SKETCH.

A roadside Inn beside a bridge
That spans a stream three arches wide,
An Inn no higher than the ridge
Of cottage roofs on either side.

A little Inn two stories high,
With kitchen, parlour, and a bar,
Three little bedrooms very nigh,
And these are all the rooms there are.

But o'er an outhouse, you will find
A banquet-room for special days,
When club-feasts, wakes, and various kind
Of rustic junketings take place.

The landlord, honest, strong, and staid,
Works in the woods adown the dale—
His wife, a matron newly made,
Attends the house and draws the ale.

* Grindleford Bridge on the Derbyshire Derwent.

From floor to roof, from wall to grate,
You scarce can see a speck of dirt,
And knife and spoon, and cup and plate,
Mark busy hands, and feet alert.

Here stops the carter with his team
To "bait" *outside*, while he baits *in* ;
And wayside travellers, who deem
A draught of ale no deadly sin.

And here the farmers, far and wide,
Bring down their flocks from hill and vale,
To wash them in the crystal tide,
And then on bread and cheese regale.

The anglers, too, oft here resort
When fishing in the stream hard by,
To end the day's uncertain sport
With ham and eggs' ambrosial fry.

Near to the Inn a blacksmith's shed
Stands ready for the shoeless steed,
And anvil, forge, and sooty head
Are ever at the traveller's need.

Here loungers from the hamlet stray
To gossip o'er the day's events,
And hear what Vulcan has to say
On their wise saws and arguments.

And when his logic is not clear,
Then to the little Inn they hie,
To w(h)et their argument with beer,
Then talk till they again are dry.

An artist now and then will come
With frame and knapsack on his back,
And make the little Inn his home
While wand'ring from the beaten track.

And here, away from city strife,
The fret, the worry, and the noise—
The poet, too, seeks fresher life,
And purer draughts of nature's joys.

I would not say this peaceful spot,
This sweet arcadian retreat,
Was free from every social blot,
And piety's most sacred seat.

Still, may the little Inn remain
Just as it is, without a change,
And never know a railway train,
Or come within the tourists' range.

July, 1880.



THE BLIND HARPIST:

A SEA-SIDE CHARACTER.

A summer noon—an August sun—
A sky without a cloud or fleck ;
I sought a pleasure steamer's deck,
The crowded, heated shore to shun.

With rapture I inhaled the breeze
That grateful from old ocean came,
And serv'd to cool the solar flame
That broil'd at ninety-odd degrees.

High on the captain's bridge I stood,
Watching the sea-birds as they flew—
The passing ships—the coast-line view—
In lazy, meditative mood.

Anon, soft strains of music fell
In soothing cadence o'er my ear—
A voice melodious and clear—
With harp and violin as well.

I look'd around, and soon beheld
A minstrel, middle-aged and blind,
Whose harp and voice so well combined,
And in such perfect concord swell'd.



Blind from his birth, he ne'er had seen
The orb that blazed upon his head—
The ocean that around him spread—
Or the rich landscape's gold and green.

His son it was who, by his side,
Accompanied with violin,
Or walk'd the deck to gather in
The coppers that but few denied.

I ask'd him when the sail was o'er
Had life still charms for him to share?
Was his infirmity a care
That robb'd him of all pleasure's store?

No! having never known the light,
He felt it not, as others would
Who once had seen Creation's "good,"
And then had lost the joy of sight.

Music, he said, was his delight,
And he could play with equal ease
On any instrument you please,
And sing from morning until night.

On summer seas—at summer noons,
He tuned his harp to trippers' ears,
And sung to steamboat passengers
The songs encored in night saloons.

He had good health—he knew no cares—
Could find his way about the town,
Or walk unaided, up and down,
The steamer's deck and cabin stairs.

“Oh, blind and happy,” was my thought,
“Would all that see could share thy peace,
And bear contented Heaven's decrees,
Though sad, like thine, their hapless lot.

“Perchance, 'twas mercy in disguise
That closed thine eyes to all things foul,
And made the music of thy soul
A richer gift—a fairer prize.”

October 30th, 1880.



THE "BLESSING OF THE BELLS." *

God bless the bells! the All Saints' bells,
 Whose first full peal this Sabbath swells,
 Proclaiming round the country side—
 O'er town and township, far and wide—
 That Brightside now takes up the strain
 Of Parish peals, o'er moor and plain,
 And echoes back to Sheffield's spire
 The melodies her chimes inspire ;
 And down the valley of the Don,
 Which Rotherham rings out upon—
 And o'er the hill to Ecclesfield,
 Whose bells for ages now have peal'd,
 And higher still, to Bradfield's tower—
 That minster of the moorland bower—
 All whose sweet chimes have soothed our ears
 When we were still in boyhood's years,
 And rung our ancestors to prayer
 When churches were but few and rare.

God bless the bells! the Gospel bells,
 Whose message from this Sunday tells,
 To crowded street and seething court,
 Where toiling artisans resort,
 Who from the forge and foundry come

* The bells of "All Saints'" Church, Sheffield, the gift of Sir John Brown, were rung for the first time on Sunday, November 14th, 1880, having been previously blessed by the Rev. J. B. Draper, vicar of the parish.

To seek the comforts of a home—
That once a week they here may find
A rest for body and for mind,
And share the peaceful Sabbath leaven—
The greatest, grandest gift of Heaven ;
Hearing the gladsome news proclaim'd,
In language eloquently framed,
That there is hope for *all* mankind,
For sinners of the vilest kind—
For all who bend the knee in prayer
Before His holy altar there.

God bless the bells ! the giver too
(Who also built this church for you),
And while he lives shall hear them ring
A pæan to his offering ;
And when he's gone they still will say
To pilgrims of a future day,
"God bless the donor of these bells,
Though he be dead, his memory dwells,
And long as we have metal left
We'll sound the praises of his gift.
God bless the worthy pastor too,
Who set us an example true,
To ring a clear, unerring chime
Of Gospel truth, to endless time,
And bid poor sinners come to pray,
And seek forgiveness while they may."

November 15th, 1880.

MISS PRIM:

HOW SHE BECAME A DISSENTER.

Miss Prim was decidedly past her prime,—
 And yet not by any means out of time
 To solace a middle-aged bachelor's life,
 Had he but the wisdom to value a wife ;
 For although her charms might be somewhat faded,
 Their roundness gone, and their freshness shaded,
 She had still a comely figure and face,
 And tripp'd along with a youthful grace,—
 Slim little waist, and sharp little nose,
 Neat little ankles, and shapely toes,
 Pearly white teeth, and golden hair,
 That curled down her cheeks in ringlets fair,
 (For she was a lady of classical taste,
 And lov'd the *antique*, and whatever was chaste),
 She dwelt in a twenty pound house in town,
 In a genteel suburb, where, almost unknown,
 She frugally liv'd, alone and in peace,
 On a scanty income that knew no increase ;
 And, being in piety somewhat emotional,
 Spent much of her time in service devotional ;

Attended a church every morning habitual,
 Fam'd for the strictness and height of its ritual,—
 Aided the Vicar in matters parochial,
 As well as the Curate on subjects colloquial ;—
 Sunday schools, tea meetings, Dorcas and Bible class,
 Scarcely an evening a week would she idle pass,
 And every night sleep the sleep of the just,
 Though a lone little spinster with no one to trust.

* * * * *

Having order'd her modest repast for the day
 On Christmas Day morn, she went early to pray.
 Having spent the whole week in church decoration,
 She felt like a saint, now, in adoration,
 And thought that the Reverend Septimus Bore
 Never preach'd such a sermon on Advent before,
 —She sang the responses, intoning the creeds,
 With her face to the East, as her conscience needs ;
 She joined in the anthem with hearty accord,
 And rev'rently bowed at the name of her Lord ;
 She stay'd the Communion—meek little sinner—
 And then with light heart tripp'd home to her dinner.

* * * * *

Now hurrying home o'er the ice and the snow,
 (The latter above and the former below,
 Concealing those treacherous, dangerous slides,
 Which the naughty street boys make their holiday glides),
 It chanc'd that Miss Prim made a slip and a stumble,



Which ended at last in a very foul tumble,
 Giving her foot such a terrible sprain,
 That her effort to rise made her cry out with pain;
 No cab was at hand—what was she to do?
 She had still half-a-mile or three-quarters to go—
 When just at that moment, a middle-aged stranger
 Perceiving a lady distress'd and in danger,
 Assisted her kindly to rise from the gutter,
 And with his strong arm on her feet again put her;
 But finding her still quite as helpless as ever,
 Could he, Christian gentleman, leave her thus? Never!
 So offer'd his arm, which she gladly accepted,
 (For to stay where she was could be hardly expected),
 And so partly walking, supported, or carried,
 She at last reach'd her home—where the worthy man
 tarried
 To see that the patient was duly attended
 By a neighbouring surgeon whom he recommended.

* * * * *

Now the Christian who did this Samaritan's part
 Was Joshua Justman, a master of art,—
 That is, in the line of upholstery and fittings,
 House decorations, renewals and "flittings,"
 A man much esteemed, though unblest with a spouse,
 With a capital shop and a well-furnished house,
 A deacon at church of the Baptist persuasion
 And chief of his chapel on every occasion.
 Pious and prosperous, unctuous and portly,

No wonder Miss Prim thought him noble and courtly;
While he on the other hand felt a pulsation
Creep over his heart (quite a novel sensation),
Which he ne'er had before, since he felt her soft arm
Clutching his, like a tendril, deliciously warm,
And thought, for the first time, how pleasant it might be
To have such a tendril there daily and nightly.
So turning these matters well over in bed
He turned them so oft he turned sleep from his head.

* * * * *

Next evening he called, as you might have expected,
To ask how his yesterday's friend was affected,
Was her foot any worse? had she suffered much pain?
Was any bone fractured? or only a sprain?
"Oh, better, sir, thanks—nothing broken at all,
How kind to inquire! How considerate to call!
Would he stay and have tea? She was just going to
make it;"

And she blush'd to the ears when he said he would take it,
"'Twas the beverage he lov'd, and his fav'rite refection."
And take he did, to his great satisfaction,
For Miss Prim knew the secret of theine decoction,
And all that makes up the true English concoction—
The sugar, and cream, and boiling hot water,
As well as the muffin and toast that comes after.
All which Mr. Justman fail'd not to take note of
As other good reasons for what he had thought of,
For though Nonconformist in matters polemical,

In worldly affairs he was no wise ascetical,
 And often had said that the wife of his choice
 Should be one that could cook and brew tea that was
 nice ;

So when he departed he press'd her hand dearly,
 And hoped she'd allow him to call again early,
 To learn how her poor little foot was progressing,
 A boon she allow'd, without over-much pressing.

* * * * *

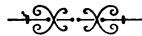
He of course call'd again, and not only once,
 But many more times than I here can announce,
 And before that dear foot had got properly heal'd
 The fate of its owner for lifetime was seal'd :
 Mr. Justman had offered his hand and his heart,
 Of his worldly possession, reversion, and part,
 The best pew in chapel, and, dignity rare,
 Of being the wife of first officer there,
 Affording full scope, and occasions abundant
 For pious pursuits, which in her were redundant.
 And although I dare say she would much have preferr'd
 To adhere to the rites she so long had rever'd,
 And taken her husband to hear the discourses
 Of orthodox clergy in orthodox churches—
 (For up to that time, she had always regarded
 Dissent as a sin to be ever discarded)—
 Yet failing her power to accomplish these wishes,
 Was she to refuse him? his virtues and riches?
 She was lonely, poor thing, and her income but slender,

With a craving for sympathy, manly and tender,
 Can you blame her for yielding at last her consent
 To take him for better, or worse, or dissent?
 And so it was fixed that when Eastertide came
 They two should be one, and Miss Prim change her name.

* * * *

Married and settled, I'm bound to admit
 Mrs. Justman soon show'd herself able and fit
 To fill the new station to which she was call'd,
 And as wife of a deacon his office uphold.
 She took to dissent, as she took to her husband,
 And the tie in both cases was never a loose band;
 Attended the chapel twice every Sunday,
 As well as on week day—and every Monday
 Had at her own house a tea meeting of mothers
 (Although ne'er one herself) to do sewing for others,
 Besides many other good works of that kind,
 Which filled up her time and consoled her pure mind
 For quitting the Church of her early probation
 And the Reverend Septimus Bore's ministration;
 So happy was she that she ever was thankful
 For that fall on the ice and that sprain of her ankle.

Christmas, 1880.



THE FERN HAWKER.

“Will you buy any ferns, sir, beautiful ferns,
Fresh from the woodlands and Derbyshire burns;
I have cull’d them myself, over forest and fell,
In rocky ravine and in deep moorland dell?

There are bracken, and hart’s-tongue, and lady-fern fair,
And shield-fern and spleenwort, and dark maiden hair,
There are two polypodies, the common and limestone,
Specimens such as you seldom set eyes on.

I have carried them far—twenty miles I’ll be bound,
And spent three whole days and two nights in the round,
I have liv’d like a hermit, and slept where I could,
In cheap village lodging, or cave in a wood.

I have scrambled o’er crags, and on ruins and walls,
And waded moss-swamps, where the mountain rill brawls,
I have ransack’d old quarries and cavernous keeps,
Where the limestone ferns grow in the ivy-clad steeps.

And here’s the whole lot, sir, the toil of three days,
You shall have for ten shillings put down at your place,
I will plant them myself and arrange them in order
On rockery, fern-house, aquarium, or border.

I have wife, sir, and children, for whom to provide
In the best way I can, for I've little beside
What I get by street-hawking ferns, mosses, and plants,
Or aught growing wild that a gentleman wants.

In spring-time and summer it's all very well,
But it's hard work in winter, with nothing to sell;
At Christmas I do what I can getting holly,
But with snow a foot thick even that's not so jolly.

For two months since then I've had struggles enough
To get daily bread and to keep the wolf off,
For we've sometimes had barely a crust in the house,
And a fire scarce sufficient to warm a poor mouse.

But now that the throstle once more pipes his lay,
(For he, too, like us, has starv'd many a day),
I feel that, like him, I can whistle and sing,
At the prospect of sunshine, and flowers, and spring.

So what will you buy, sir, what will you buy?
If you won't take the lot, just a few of them try,
You may take what you choose, and your own price
advance,
And I'll drink your good health when I first have a
chance!"



TO DIVES.

Oh, Dives, in thy early youth,
Though poor as Lazarus in truth,
Thou blossom'd as the rose;
Thy heart was gay, thy footsteps light,
No gouty fetters bound them tight
And agonised thy toes.

Thine eyes gleam'd bright within their sheath,
And ne'er a crowfoot underneath,
Or e'en a touch of bile;
Thy voice was cheery as the lark's,
Thy troubles flew away like sparks,
And left thee with a smile.

In healthy work and exercise,
In manly sports and pleasures wise
Thou hadst a keen delight.
And, ah! with what assuring hope
Thou didst with difficulties cope,
And win in every fight.

And now, life's battle being won,
And thou, oh Dives, look'd upon
As rich and wise and great,
I fail to see that joyous smile,
And hear that merry laugh the while,
That mark'd thy former state.

I see thee in thy brougham neat,
Riding, to save thy gouty feet
And too plethoric frame;
And think how much that rosy hue
To dinners *à la mode* is due.
And wines of vintage fame.

Fortune indeed has been thy friend,
And sent thee riches without end,
As Midas had of old;
And yet methinks I see a trace
Of weariness upon thy face—
Like him, oppress'd with gold.

The gardener that mows thy lawn—
Thy groom that rises with the dawn,
Are happier than thou;
For *they* reckon not of life's short reign,
Their healthy vitals know no pain,
No cares are on *their* brow.

Well! take the bitter with the sweet,
For even Dives must submit
To laws of compensation;
Youth, manhood, age, have each their joys,
And wealth and poverty, alloys,
That regulate each station.

June 2, 1881.

HOLIDAY REFLECTIONS.
DEDICATED TO RECENT TOURISTS.

Thank God our holiday is o'er at last,
 Our own, our children's, and our servants' also;
 Each in their turn have had their full repast
 Of tourist pleasures, or what people call so—
 Enjoyed alike the downpour and the blast,
 And crashing thunder-storm that did appal so;
 And now we've settled down to homely duties,
 And bid adieu to Summer's fickle beauties.

“Life might be pleasant but for so-called pleasure,”
 This said a cynic not so long ago;
 And when you have a month-full at a measure,
 That aphorism, if true, proves doubly so;
 Like Midas, you may have too much of treasure,
 And lollypops all day get rather slow,
 Especially to men who know satiety,
 And want each day and hour some variety.

Each August comes this epidemic fever,
 To quit dear home, in search of brighter scenes,
 By rolling ocean, mountain, lake, or river,
 Distant or near, according to your means;
 Anon to find perchance a “joy for ever,”
 In some grand sights, with weather known as
 “Queens,”
 But sometimes also, bitter disappointment,
 And weather more for weeping than enjoyment.

For just two months goes on the great migration,
Much like the birds of passage, at this season;
And day by day, at every sea coast station,
They come and go, by instinct or by reason;
Flight after flight, of every age and station,
And every grade that railway trips can seize on,
Schoolboy and tutor, under-clerk and topmen,
Parson and lawyer, senator and shopmen.

Go where you will, you find the place o'erflowing
Like Doncaster or Epsom at the races,
And should you find a snug hotel to stow in,
Be thankful, and indulge in no grimaces
If you should pay the maximum of coin,
For minimum of comforts and of graces;
For even Grand Hotels you find a Babel,
With nothing grand except the crush at table.

If you've a family of pickaninnies,
And take apartments at some sea-side lodging,
The chances are three other sets of ninnies
In other lets around you will be dodging;
And though you pay per week a dozen guineas,
You've but a fourth of one poor maiden's drudging.
But "*olim meminisse (jam) juvabit*"
At home, sweet home again, we laugh and waive it.

Sept. 28, 1881.

APRIL THOUGHTS FOR MIDDLE-AGED
READERS.

April! thy very name suggests soft showers,
And genial sunshine, fost'ring April flowers,
The first of Flora's Agapemone,
Primrose, sweet violet, and anemone.

We love them all, but with an altered love,
From that young time when soul and body strove
To make the most of every vernal joy,
And drain the cup as yet without alloy.

With what keen zest we sought each sylvan nook,
Each mossy bank o'erhanging crystal brook,
To cull fresh specimens of flower or fern,
To grace our "hortus siccus" on return.

And if by chance we found an early bloom
Of blue forget-me-not, or caught perfume
Of golden cowslip, nestling in the grass,
We felt a rapture, now unknown, alas!

And, oh! with what delight we heard the song
Of the first birds—that migratory throng
That cross the seas to cheer us with their lay,
And share with us their summer holiday.

But now, although perchance we listen still
With certain pleasure, we have lost the thrill,
The joy ecstatic and poetic glow,
That charmed our senses thirty years ago.

"A primrose on a river's brim" is now
Merely a yellow primrose, and although
We gaze on it from morning unto night
We see it not in any other light.

To-day we heard the chiff-chaff's cheery note,
And glad we were—but yet with little thought
Of rhapsodies, or sparkling effervesce
Of youth's champagne—exuberant excess.

And yet the wheels of life run smoothly on—
Though "post meridian" we are not alone;
With dear companions of our pilgrimage
We quaff the milder joys that come with age.

Behind there follows an uprising race,
That cheer us on, and soon will fill our place;
They *are* what we once *were*—and drink the cup
Of life's elixir as we give it up.

Then, welcome once again, sweet April flowers,
And April winds (not east) with April showers!
Once more we'll wander forth by moor and mead,
And cull such pleasures as will serve our need.

Once more, with pliant rod and mimic fly
Our subtle craft beside the stream we'll ply,
While thrush and skylark warble o'er our head,
And hawthorn blossoms sweetest odours shed.

April, 1882.

SCARBRO' SKETCHES.

"BY THE SAD SEA WAVES."

If to the sad of heart,
 Beat the waves sadly,
 So to the glad of heart
 Ripple they gladly;
 Whispering soothingly,—
 Moaning in pain,—
 Just as your mood may be
 Sounds their refrain.

Ah ! what a curious
 Medley is here !
 Dives and Lazarus,
 Fish-wife and peer ;
 Rank and gentility
 Sickly and fair,—
 Haggard infirmity
 In a bath-chair.

"Beau-monde" and "demi-monde,"
 No monde at all,—
 Trippers from shoddy-monde
 Iron and coal ;

Proud aristocracy,—
Bluest of blood ;
Vulgar democracy
Happy of mood.

Pompous plutocracy
Flaunting its wealth,
Meek mediocrity
Culturing health ;
Spick-and-span puppydom
Airing its pride,
Old-fashioned fogeydom
Watching the tide.

Fashions Belgravian,
Fashions unknown,
Manners Arcadian,
Manners of town ;
Jocund hilarity,
Brow-clouded care,
Thoughtful philosophy
Taking the air.

Music most classical,
Music most vile ;
Artists dramatical,—
Every style ;
“ Irving ” and “ Santley,” or
“ Punch ” on the sands ;
Minstrels of “ Christy,” or
Soul-stirring bands.

Youth in its golden age,
Man in his prime,
Pilgrims of older age
Biding their time ;
Beautiful maidenhood,
Guileless of art,
Spinsterhood—widowhood,
Playing their part.

Priestdom and parsondom,
Low, broad, and high,
Salvation Armydom,
All in full cry ;
Sailor and fisherman,
Soldier and saint,—
Medley far greater than
Artist can paint.

Foppery, snobbery,
Wisdom, and wit,
On the same balcony
Side by side sit ;
Sharing there equally
Scarbro's blue seas,
Fann'd by, impartially,
Summer's soft breeze.

August, 1882.



PARSON AND PARISHIONER.

PARISHIONER (OLD AND POOR).

“ Parson, tell me, tell me truly,
 Is religion all you say ?
 Though I listen to you duly,
 When you preach, and when you pray,
 I am puzzled what to think on't,
 As to what you say and do,
 And I think there's some mistake on't,
 Or it cannot all be true.

“ Life, you tell us, should be holy,
 Pure in thought, and word, and deed,
 And unless we're sinless wholly
 We shall all be damn'd indeed ;
 If we fail one jot or tittle,
 We pay penalty for all,
 Though our sin be e'er so little,
 Unconverted we shall fall,

“ Fall to uttermost perdition,
 Down into the flames of hell,
 Where the fire knows no remission,
 And the torments never fail ;
 There to burn and burn for ever,
 Weeping, wailing, gnashing teeth,
 While the gnawing worm shall never
 Loose again its fang in death.

“ Parson, I am old and weary,
Weary of the strain of life,
And I long to end this dreary
Drudgery of toil and strife ;
My worst sins have been omission—
Follies of my youthful time,
None can taunt me with commission
Of a wilful wrong or crime.

“ Daily, I ask God’s forgiveness,
Nor, I humbly trust, in vain,
Yet I cannot say I’m sinless—
As you put it, ‘ born again ’ ;
Tell me, then, dear parson, tell me,
Is there hope for such as me ?
Will repentance e’er avail me,
Unconverted, though I be ? ”

PARSON.

“ My good friend, you ask me questions
Hard to answer, or explain ;
All that we can do, as Christians,
Is to preach the Gospel plain,
Holy living, righteous doing,
Faith in Christ’s atoning blood,
Bring conversion without knowing
Unto some of doubting mood.

“As to punishment eternal,
And the tortures of the damn’d,
These are mysteries supernal,
We shall never understand ;
All that I feel sure believing,
Is, that in the future state,
We shall reap the fruits of living
Good or evil, small or great.

“ Whether literal translation,
Whether metaphor or not,
Hell, means future condemnation ;
Heav’n, the brighter, happier lot.
You and I, as fellow sinners,
Cannot solve God’s mysteries,
Let us strive, then, to be winners
Of this Heavenly Paradise.

“And, I’m sure, that in His mercy,
God will judge the world aright,
And (although this may be heresy),
E’en the banish’d may have light ;
For, while He shall rule in Heaven,
Hope will never wholly die,
And the vilest may have given
Gleams of some remoter sky.”

October, 1882.



MIDDLE-AGE THOUGHTS ON FATHER CHRISTMAS.

Father Christmas ! Father Christmas !
 Every year your locks grow whiter,
 Every year you lose your freshness,
 Though, indeed, your steps seem lighter,
 And you come and go more quickly,
 Than you did when we were young,
 And, although your smile looks sickly,
 Loud and lusty is your tongue.

Is it you, Old Father Christmas,
 Or ourselves that graver grow ?
 Is it we that fail in briskness,
 Or have you grown tame and slow ?
 Years ago you seem'd so jolly,
 And we lov'd your face to greet,
 Now a shade of melancholy
 Comes across us when we meet.

Is it that each visitation,
 Now reminds us more and more,
 Of the annual devastation,
 Of old friends of years before ?

Of the ever thinning phalanx,
 Veteran after veteran down,
 And their places filled by new ranks
 We have scarcely seen or known ?

Yet whene'er we look around us
 In the markets and the streets,
 Eager, crowding groups surround us,
 All intent on Christmas treats
 On a joyful, festive season,
 Shar'd alike by young and old,
 Thinking less of feasts of reason
 Than gastronomy untold.

As upon the field of battle,
 Those that live forget the slain
 In the charge and musket rattle,
 Time is not for sorrows vain.
 So amid the jubilation
 Of this festival of gladness,
 We must join the demonstration
 And give holiday to sadness.

But in spite of human wishes
 Human stomachs often fail,
 And your epicurean dishes
 Lure sometimes without avail ;
 Sober sirloin, modest turkey,
 Now suffice our frugal wants,
 And plum-pudding, proud and perky,
 Tempts us not with all its vaunts.

MIDDLE-AGE THOUGHTS ON FATHER CHRISTMAS. 299

Father Christmas—pass the sherry !

Though we've changed we still may dine,
And—don't be in such a hurry—

Let us talk of old lang syne ;
Let us moralise and prattle,

'Tis the privilege of fogey's,
Fight again life's oft-fought battle,
And forget our mental bogeys.

Christmas, 1882.



SEA-BIRDS.

Oh for the sea-bird's life !
The life of freedom and fancy !
To fly, to swim, or to run,
Just as the will or the chance be ;
To perch on the beetling crag,
Or float on the crested billow,
Or soar for a hundred leagues,
With only a cloud for a pillow !

As I sail along the coast,—
A tourist in search of pleasure—
I mark with feelings of envy
Your liberty's priceless treasure.
No physical bonds are yours,
No cares of home or profession ;
All islands and seas are yours,
And the wide world your possession.

Beautiful birds are ye all—
Guillemot, puffin, and gull—
As ye glance in the summer sunlight,
Your white wings stretched out full ;
Now skimming along the surface,
Or through the green waves diving ;
Now scudding far away seaward,
Or with the white squall driving.

While we, poor puny men,
Tied down to a few square miles,
Can only but vaguely picture
The world beyond our isles.
You come and go at pleasure,
According to time and season,
With only instinct for guidance,
To you far better than reason.

On a ledge of the rugged cliff,
Ye bring up your brood in gladness,
And little know ye of care,
Anxiety, or sadness ;
Of colleges and of schools,
And your offspring's education,
Or the greatest worry of all,
Choosing their life's vocation.

No troublesome doubts have ye,
As to future state and condition,
No dogmas, doctrines, or creeds,
Of ritual and religion ;
You live and enjoy the blessings
A merciful God has given,
And show in a thousand ways,
Your gratitude to heaven.

Unlike your relations on shore,
Who trust to the land for forage,
Your daily bread is secure,
In ocean's boundless storage ;
Where, safe from the frosts of winter,
Your wants are ever supplied—
Where the fowler's gun cannot reach,
And the hurricane is defied.

From Norway's distant fiords,
From Faroe isles and Shetland,
From a hundred creeks and caves,
Round Flambro's chalky headland,
You bring your new-fledg'd young
To learn the fisher-birds' science,
Of helping themselves in their need,
And trusting to self-appliance.

Birds, joyous birds of the sea,
The summer is flying apace,
Our holidays soon will be o'er,
And we have long winter to face ;
While *we*, in the mirk of the town,
Shall struggle at home with the weather,
You from islet to isle will take wing,
Blending duty and pleasure together.

August, 1883.

THE FUTURE OF ENGLAND.

A DYSPEPTIC VISION, SUGGESTED BY TRADES UNIONS,
THE PROPOSED MINERS' STRIKE, AND OTHER
ASPECTS OF THE TIMES.

I see before me days of deep'ning gloom,—
When England's glory shall be overcast,
When her prosperity shall know its doom,
And be a thing of history and the past.

When her huge factories and world-wide trade
Slowly, but surely, shall forsake the land,
Seeking fresh fields of wider range and grade,
Where work and liberty go hand-in-hand ;

Where toil is free—and trade both free and fair,
And honest men can sell their honest sweat,
Unfetter'd by a despot " Union's " care
Or a paid demagogue's tyrannic threat ;

Where men can freely breathe and move about
O'er space unlimited, without the fear
Of over-crowding, or the constant doubt
That in the crush they may be in the rear ;

Where tax-collectors do not grind them down,
And seize them by the throat at every turn,
For rates to poor, the district, or the Crown,
That filch what wretched profits traders earn ;

Where capital and labour meet as friends,
Helping each other for their common weal,
And not as foes that fight for rival ends,
And while they quarrel let the stranger steal.

I see before me youths of cultur'd mind,
Well-born, and school'd, with laurels on their brow,
Who in the struggling crowd can barely find
A niche of competence, however low.

I also see the children of the poor,
In masses educated, trained, and taught,
By public purse, to rise "Excelsior,"
And find at last the rising lead to nought.

I see Democracy, with giant stride,
Changing our laws, our Church, our very Throne,
Wrestling the power from old patrician pride,
Yet giving nothing better of its own.

I see our happy sea-surrounded home,
Still lov'd and cherish'd for its glorious past,
Where Transatlantic moralists will roam
O'er fallen works, still in their ruins vast.

Such are the gloomy visions of my soul,
Which, let us hope, may only prove a dream ;
The ugly offspring of some nightmare foul,
And not the grim realities they seem.

November 15th, 1883.

THE GAMEKEEPER:

A CHRISTMAS PASTORAL.


At the first dawn of day, while the new-fallen snow
Lies smooth and unspeck'd on the pastures below,
And the leaves of the forest are filigree'd o'er,
With crystals of snow-flake and fretwork of hoar,

The gamekeeper starts on his long morning round,
To examine his traps and look over his ground,
To see that no poacher invade with his snares
The sacred preserves of his pheasants and hares.

With his gun on his arm, and his dog at his side,
And his velveteen coat, with its pockets so wide,
And with leggings and boots that all weathers defy,
He stalks through the snow as he would through the rye.

He lives in a cottage of gable and thatch
That stands near the wood in a small garden patch,
Where in three little rooms all his family dwell,
With a dog, and a cat, and a jackdaw as well.

A ruddy-faced wife, with two girls and a boy,
Are his household Penates—his life's dearest joy—
With these, and his dogs, guns, ferrets, and game,
His world is made up, and is ever the same.



He keeps a few fowls in a henroost hard by,
And a sleek little pig in a neighbouring sty,
Which at Christmas is slaughter'd, with festival rites,
And serves all the year with its salted delights.

To-day as he comes from his walk through the snow,
With a handful of holly, with berries aglow,
He meets with a welcome from children and wife
That makes it the happiest day of his life.

A monster mince-pie, with a fowl and a chine,
Is the glorious feast on which all are to dine,
While at the round table the little ones stand
As hungry as happy—their dinner at hand.

He has not been to church and heard "Christians
Awake!"

No "waits" came at midnight, his slumbers to break,
No tokens of Christmas, as yet, has he seen
But his own little cot, with its decking of green.

And yet he's as merry as though he were Lord
At the big Manor-house, with its guest-
Where feasting and sporting, and
Succeed one another all day long.

A newspaper serves him
Over which at a night
And ponder the
To puzzle me

Of the world and its strife he knows nothing, nor cares,
Of politics, commerce, stocks, markets, or shares,
Of affairs in the East, or affairs in the West,
He scarce knows the difference—ignorance blest !

With a garden, a cottage, and guinea a week,
And a gamekeeper's suit, he is rich; so to speak,
And what is far better, is also content,
Having never yet learnt what " Excelsior " meant.

And when he is old, and his mission fulfill'd,
When his last shot is fired and his last rabbit killed,
He will die as he lived in his snug little cot,
Without e'er a complaint of the gamekeeper's lot !

Christmas, 1878.



THOUGHTS ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.

"The King is dead—long live the King!"

And so to us this New Year's morn,
A year is dead—a year is born ;
And from ten thousand steeples ring
The joy-bells of its welcoming.

Another year! How many more,
Throughout immeasurable time,
Since chaos first was changed to clime
Fitted for life—have gone before,
Who shall the mystery explore?

In vain we study nature's page—
Her granite rocks, her limestone caves ;
Her river beds, and glacier waves—
All that we find are signs of age
Too vast and wildering to gauge.

For all historic records tell
Relate to but six thousand years ;
Since Adam's race on earth appears,
And all beyond them hangs a veil,
Impervious and inscrutable.

And what this planet's life may be,
Ere from the sun, its heat supply
Shall cease, and like the moon it die,—
This, with the past, poor mortals we,
Must leave to God's untold decree.

But this we know, whate'er our state,
Our trifling years are fleeting fast ;
Full soon the next will be our last,
And we shall share the common fate,
And pay th' inevitable debt.

Of all the millions now alive,
Who now this globe's circumference tread,—
Of all the million millions dead,
What count we in the swarming hive,
One more or less, to live and strive.

And when we look towards the sky,
And view those mystic orbs and stars,
From distant Sirius to Mars,
We marvel if their destiny
May be life's new futurity.

Another year ! May this reveal,
In spite of adverse horoscope,
More elements of peace and hope,
Than that o'er which the midnight bell
Toll'd forth the latest chronicle.

Another year ! Let the bells ring,—
From dome and tower and pinnacle,
Let them crash out a joyous peal,
To give the stranger welcoming,
And celebrate his christening.

January 1st, 1884.

THOUGHTS ON "WATCH NIGHT."

On New Year's Eve the faithful few
God's temple seek, to watch and pray ;
To watch the old year die away,
And ask for blessings on the new.

They come at midnight's solemn hour,
When solemn bells toll sad and slow,
When solemn prayers are mutter'd low,
And solemn thoughts the soul o'erpower.

The clock strikes twelve ! the watch is o'er ;
The year has closed his last of days,
Dead as a thing of mortal ways ;
A life gone out for evermore !

The bells have ceas'd their doleful chime,
And joyous peals from spire and tower
Proclaim the New Year's natal hour,
Another calendar of time !

They break upon the ear of those
Whose sanctuary is their home ;
Who care not through the night to roam,
To watch in crowds and pray in rows ;

Who at their own fireside prefer
 To probe the mysteries of life ;
 Its genesis, and course of strife,
 Its end, and boundless sepulchre ;

To meditate on time's abyss,
 Since first its measurement began ;
 Coeval with the race of man—
 Eternity's parenthesis !

For does not every rood of land,
 And every turf whereon we tread,
 Contain the ashes of the dead—
 Of races countless as the sand ?

Th' immortal thing we call the soul,
 Was it created at our birth ;
 Or had it dwelt before on earth,
 In other form beyond recall ?

We sometimes feel as if it had,
 And lived before in other guise,
 As in a dream our mental eyes
 See phantom visions good or bad.

Why should we deem the notion strange ?
 If spirit life must endless be,
 Why should not immortality
 Backward as well as forward range ?

The vigil ends—Reflection's train
In dreamy fancy melts away—
Matter o'er mind once more holds sway,
And lulls in soothing sleep the brain.

God grant the morn's refreshing beams
May bring Philosophy new light,
And give to Faith a deeper sight,
And gild with hope our darkest dreams!

December 31st, 1884.





